

UNDER PRESSURE
HOW TO BEAT THE
EXAM BLUES

EDUCATION

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THE INDEPENDENT

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Heads rebel against drive for standards

By Ben Russell
Education Correspondent

HEAD teachers threatened a rebellion against government targets for raising standards in the 3Rs yesterday, warning they would refuse to set "unrealistic" goals.

The National Association of Headteachers (NAHT) warned that schools would not co-operate with national targets "plucked out of the air" to meet political aims.

The move threatens to undermine a central plank of the Government's drive to raise standards in schools.

Ministers want 80 per cent of 11-year-olds to reach expected standards in English and 75 per cent to hit certain levels of maths by 2002.

Just over 60 per cent achieve the required level in national curriculum tests. David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education, has promised to resign if the targets are not met.

But headteachers meeting in Eastbourne accused the Government of selecting arbitrary and unrealistic goals for local authorities.

David Hart, the NAHT general secretary, pledged to take court action if local authorities imposed targets on schools against their will.

He said: "It would be helpful if there was agreement but if agreement can't be reached the schools position must prevail. Just because the Government wants to reverse established practice in target setting it does not mean we have to roll over and say they have got it right."

Delegates unanimously passed motions attacking the

Government for imposing targets and called for schools to be free to set their own goals.

Brian McNutt, head teacher of Eastway Primary School in The Wirral, warned that the emphasis on exam targets could make schools "educational sweat shops". He said: "It's a surreal world if children's best performance is met with league tables and public shame."

"To achieve the targets will schools be turned into exam factories, just simple factual machines to get us through the tests? If we are going to improve standards the Government needs to work with us, rather than impose national targets."

Mr Hart said: "I will jump for joy if we hit the targets, but if we can't it could be due to a whole range of factors. The Government is bravely treading in very difficult waters. Target setting is not an exact science."

The School Standards and Framework Bill, at present passing through the Commons, will allow local authorities to send in inspectors, appoint new governors or take control of budgets if schools are thought likely to miss targets for raising standards.

But Mr Hart said the powers should only be used in extreme circumstances and he threatened to press for a judicial review if local authorities used the legislation too readily.

Stephen Byers, the school standards minister, said the targets were "both reasonable and realistic". He said: "Surely it's not unreasonable to expect that in four years time four out of five 11-year-olds will have reached the level expected of them."

National executive member Mick Brookes won rapturous ap-

plause from delegates at the union's national conference when he told them: "This is a time to stand up and say no."

Mr Brookes, head teacher of Sherwood Junior School in Nottinghamshire, said: "There's a very clear message from the National Council to all our members: do not be bullied and pressurised into accepting unreasonable targets. We will come up with our own considered targets."

Delegates also attacked the growth of production-line education, insisting that schools were "places of wisdom, not factories of knowledge."

Chris McDonnell, head of Fulfen Primary School in Burntwood, Staffordshire, said targets did not reflect a school's full role. He said: "Schools are not factories. Knowledge is not a commodity to be sold. They are people places."

Graham Lane, education chairman of the Local Government Association, said: "If a school and a local education authority cannot agree on a target we will publish both targets and see which is right. The Government's targets for 2002 are very generalised. Some education authorities won't meet them, then we will have to work out what happens."

The headteachers demanded a change in the law to limit the powers of "school governors from hell". They asked for governors to be given compulsory training and appealed for legislation setting strict boundaries on their role.

The conference heard the case of a governor who had stood in a school car park timing when teachers came and went.



Emma Tebodor, a member of Seven Sisters Group, takes the platform at King's Cross station, north London. Further events are planned for Waterloo Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

Put shoulder to the wheel, Blair tells the nation

By Colin Crown
Chief Political Correspondent

TONY BLAIR last night adopted the hairshirt approach by declaring that he fears Britain has been paying itself too much, and calling on the nation to "put its shoulder to the wheel".

The Prime Minister's clarification call for pay restraint to the Confederation of British Industry last night fitted neatly into the philosophy for hard work and modest rewards which he has handed down to his children, Euan, Nicky and Kathryn.

In an interview to be published today, Mr Blair reveals one of his secrets for success in life. He told *Eva* magazine that he was worried that life was too easy for his three children and declared that "a little bit of a struggle" did them no harm.

"You've got to be able to make your own way, your own life and I think to do well in life you need a little bit of struggle."

The words amount to a different strand of the same philosophy Mr Blair delivered in his speech to the annual dinner of the CBI. The growth in private sector earnings gave "serious cause for concern", the Prime Minister told his audience from the world of big business.

"It would be the worst of short-termism now to pay ourselves more today at the cost of higher interest rates, fewer jobs and slower growth tomorrow. This must apply to private and public sector alike."

"It really is up to us: the greater the responsibility, the bigger the reward," he said.

And Mr Blair said that eco-

nomic success could not be achieved by the Government alone, adding: "The whole nation must put its shoulder to the wheel."

The "sound and prudent" message about the economy is also being used in the Blair household for the family finances.

The Prime Minister confirmed in the *Eva* interview that the Blairs claimed child benefit in common with the rest of the country.



Blair: 'A little bit of a struggle' does you no harm

"Everyone gets it. It's up to you what you spend it on, but I do think most people spend it on their kids. We treat it as though it's not just part of the family income and we do try to make sure that it gets spent on the children."

It is another lesson for living from the Blair kitchen, that big business may like to follow.

But there was a sting in the tail. The Prime Minister pointed out that those on the higher tax rate of 40 per cent could see child benefit taxed in future.

Fat cats, page 6

Fiasco over Lawrence arrest

By Kathy Marks

THE senior detective who led the Stephen Lawrence murder investigation admitted yesterday that until very recently he did not understand the legal grounds on which police officers can arrest suspects.

Former detective superintendent Brian Weeden, who retired in 1994 after 30 years in the force, told the public inquiry into Stephen's death that he had believed that hard evidence was required before arrests could be made. It was only after taking legal advice earlier

this year while preparing a statement for the public inquiry, he said, that it became clear to him that reasonable grounds for suspicion were sufficient.

The inquiry has heard that the five white youths alleged to have stabbed Stephen in a racist attack in Eltham, south-east London, in 1993 were named by numerous informants in the first 48 hours. But they were not arrested for at least a fortnight and attempts to prosecute them were unsuccessful.

Mr Weeden, who led the murder investigation for 14 months, said yesterday that his

strategy had been to wait for evidence before moving in. "I had never before in any murder case arrested anyone without evidence, as opposed to information," he said.

Michael Mansfield QC, counsel for the Lawrence family, pointed out that he had given a different explanation when interviewed by Kent police officers on behalf of the Police Complaints Authority last year.

"You maintained, and you only recently shifted, that not only did you want evidence, you did not have the power to arrest until you had evidence. That

was the legal position as you saw it," he said. "That's perfectly true," Mr Weeden replied.

Mr Mansfield asked: "Do you not find it rather disturbing that it has taken all this time for you to recognise a fairly basic tenet of criminal law?"

"I think it's regrettable," he replied.

Mr Weeden denied that when he finally decided to make arrests, it was in response to "extraneous pressures" such as a high-profile meeting in London the previous day between the Lawrences and President Nelson Mandela.

"Without disrespect to the gentleman in question, a very well-respected statesman, it was like a drop in the ocean," he said.

"There was pressure right from the very beginning. There was considerable media interest in the case; there was interest also from the Home Office; Members of Parliament were asking questions; television crews were virtually camping on the doorstep."

He admitted, however, that during his period in charge of the case, at least 20 major errors and omissions were made. The inquiry continues today.

Iraq demands war compensation from Britain

By Ian Burrell
Home affairs Correspondent

IRAQ is demanding compensation from Britain over damage allegedly caused by depleted uranium shells in the Gulf War. The Iraqi Foreign Minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf, has sent a complaint to the United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, accusing Britain and the United States of

"exposing vast areas [of Iraq] to fatal radioactive pollution".

The complaint followed the release of what Mr al-Sahaf described as a "new and additional admission" by the Foreign Office on 30 April in an official statement that "British tanks used depleted uranium (DU) shells during the Gulf War on orders from the British Ministry of Defence".

Mr al-Sahaf told Mr Annan:

"A number of diseases, unfamiliar in the past, have been registered, such as foetal and bone deformities and other cases that cannot be explained."

"Individuals living in the bombarded areas suffer from such diseases, in addition to rising cases of child leukaemia."

In a letter to the Labour MP George Galloway, written on 30 April, Derek Fatchez, the Foreign Office minister, admitted

DU had harmful effects. The letter stated: "DU has the potential to cause adverse health effects if ingested, inhaled (for example, from DU dust in the vicinity of a target...) or absorbed..."

Britain admits to firing fewer than 100 DU shells in the 1991 conflict but says US troops fired considerably more.

Yesterday, the Labour backbencher Tam Dabell, who has campaigned for the lifting of

sanctions against Iraq, called on Britain to co-operate with the Iraqi authorities in investigating so-called Gulf War Syndrome. He believes British Gulf War veterans and Iraqi people were suffering the same symptoms.

A Ministry of Defence spokesman said: "The UK has never attempted to conceal its use of depleted uranium ammunition in the Gulf."

Poisonous legacy, page 13

Today's news

Rock stars get the Internet blues

ROCK stars and record companies lined up to complain yesterday that fans downloading free music from the Internet is costing them millions and could kill off the British music industry. Page 3

Newcastle in crisis

NEWCASTLE United appeared to be in crisis last night as two directors walked out of the troubled football club after apparently losing out in a power struggle with Sir John Hall, the multimillionaire businessman who has been the driving force behind the club. Page 5

Placenta protest

A TELEVISION programme which showed people cooking and eating a human placenta has been criticised by the Broadcasting Standards Commission. Page 7

Help stop this now

Day after day, this bear is dragged into a bloody arena to face pairs of bull terriers. His teeth have been ripped out and his claws blunted, so he is at the dogs' mercy. The trainer won't let him be killed, but the bear doesn't know this. Over and over again, he is fighting for his life.

Over 2,000 bear-baitings take place each year in Pakistan, despite the fact that they are now banned by law.

WSPA campaigns to free captive bears, campaigns to enforce laws protecting bears and fights ignorance with training and education.

Please help WSPA's campaign against bear baiting. Return this coupon with your gift to the address below.

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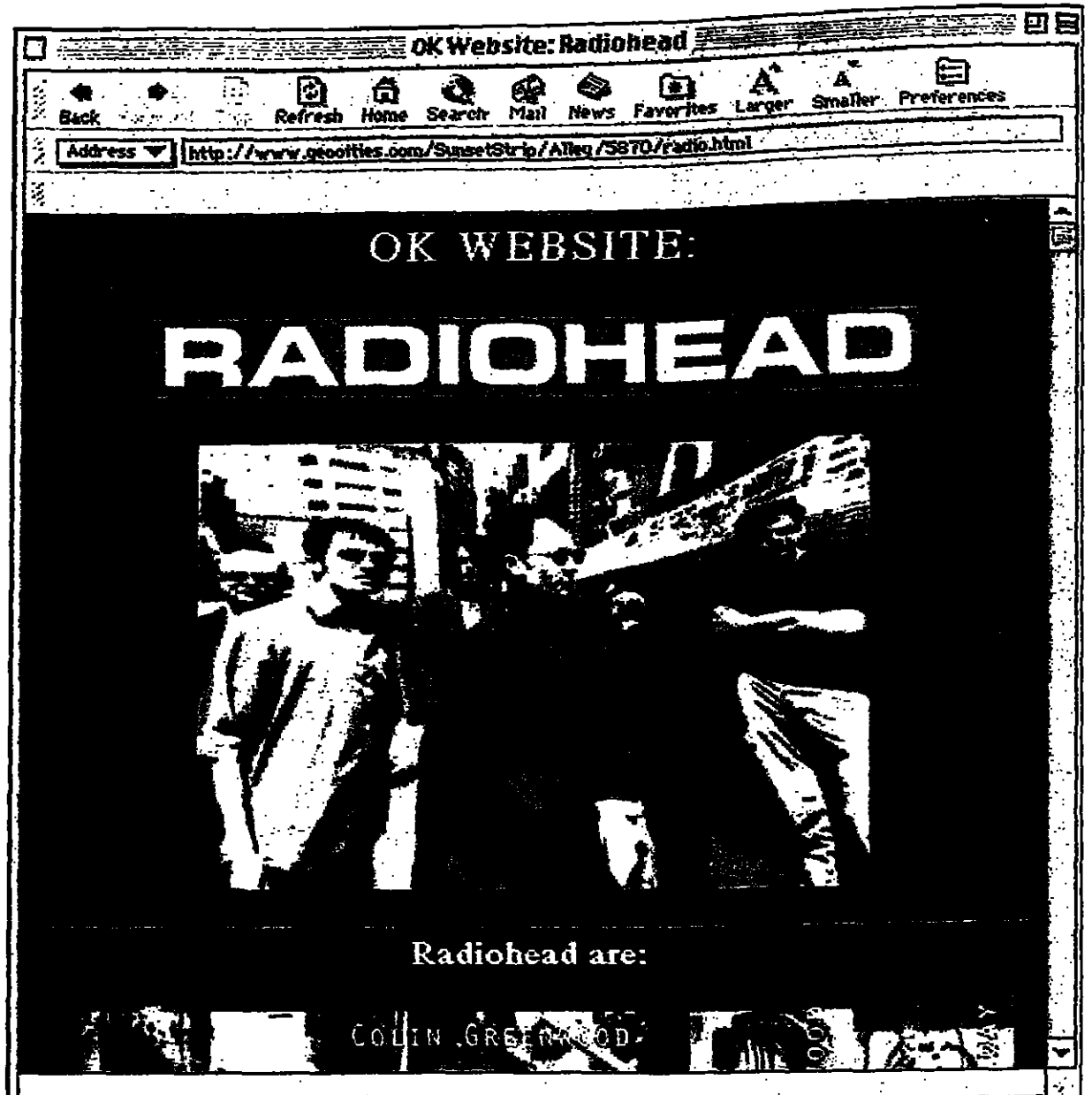
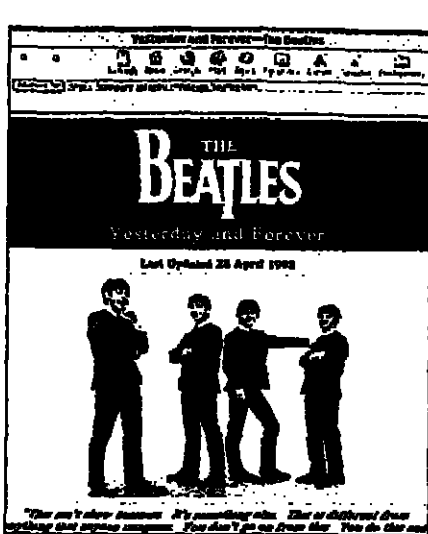
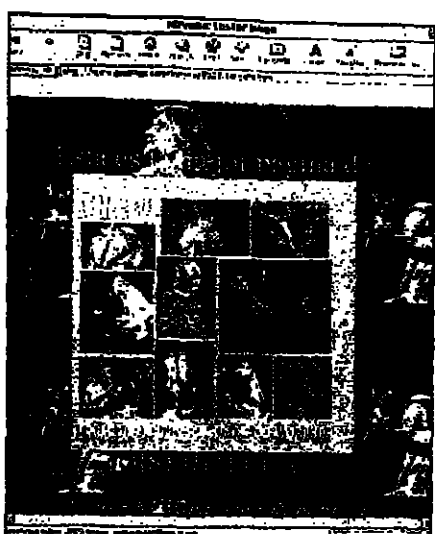
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WSPA World Society for the Protection of Animals



Fans can visit Radiohead's Internet site above and, from left, Led Zeppelin, The Beatles and Nirvana

A new CD costs £14.49. Or, you could download it for free on the Internet. No wonder the music business is sounding off

By Paul McCann
Media Editor

ROCK STARS and record companies lined up to complain yesterday that fans downloading free music from the Internet is costing them millions and could kill off the British music industry.

Launching a new lobby group, British Musical Rights, record company bosses blamed the telecom industry for undermining its business and called on the Government to set up a task-force to strengthen international copyright agreements.

Beatles producer Sir George Martin and Ashley Slater of the band Freakpower gathered with record company executives be-

cause of the threat to their income posed by fans placing CD-quality recordings on the Internet. Anyone with the right technology can download their music and keep it for free.

Slater, whose band had a number one hit with "Tune In Turn On Cop", said: "If my copyright isn't protected I go out - a little twinkly light in the Cool Britannia sign goes out - and I'm just one of tens of thousands of musicians who rely on that."

"It's virtually impossible to earn money through touring. After four years we still owe our record company £350,000."

William Booth of Sony Music said: "My company invests millions of pounds each year in new writing talent and new composers and to recover that

money we need to be paid. If we don't get paid because it goes on the Internet we can't continue to make that investment in new talent and we can't continue to pay people to collect money for those new composers."

Internet service providers and telecommunication companies which carried the electronic messages should share some responsibility, he said.

At the heart of the industry's worries is a new digital software - freely available on the Internet - known as MP3 or MPEG, which can take as little three minutes to download a song in perfect digital CD quality from a web site.

Most MP3 sites are created by fans in their bedrooms happy to share their rare tracks and

bootleg versions. MP3 aficionados trade songs and whole CDs - if you don't bring something to trade it is known as "leeching". Nevertheless, MP3 versions of CDs get left on the web for anyone to download.

And it only takes one Internet address for a CD of a popular band to become well-known and thousands of copies can be made and thousands of potential sales lost.

In America the record industry, led by David Geffen of Geffen music, has clamped down on MP3 sites, using copyright legislation to close as many as 250. However, the British record industry was told yesterday that as many as 26,000 sites exist on the World Wide Web.

The problem for the authorities is that once closed down fans can set up a new web site or they can disappear into the myriad so-called "chat rooms" and discussion zones of the Internet where they can exchange their music without being traced.

"It can feel quite seedy," says Internet journalist Simon Waldman. "You chat for a bit and then ask them if they have anything to swap. They usually have Pearl Jam or another American band, either that or you get directed to an address for a site in Poland where you can get a free Spice Girls CD."

The overwhelming numbers of young American men using the Internet means that the

bands with the largest numbers of free music sites devoted to them tend to be guitar bands like Metallica and Nirvana which has 3,462 MP3 sites compared to Bob Dylan's paltry 546.

In the UK, the British Phonographic Institute has acted to remove unlicensed music from just five sites - but such is the confusion over Internet copyright law that they acted not against students in a back bedroom but some of Britain's biggest companies. BT, the BBC, Demon Internet and Virgin Net had all unknowingly placed music that could be copied on their sites and the BPI forced them to remove it.

The irony for the music industry is that the Internet is likely to be the distribution sys-

tem of the future for music sales. Once record companies figure out an encryption technology that allows it to charge people for on-line music, it would have a way to sell CDs without the cost of actually pressing a record and keeping it in an expensive high street shop.

David Bowie and The Rolling Stones have invested in ventures overseen by Larry Rosen, a former record industry executive who has pioneered selling and marketing music on the Internet.

For less well known bands, however, the Internet provides a new way of reaching an audience. Unsigned bands like Nottingham's Slug Oven have created their own sites with playable music that means they

can reach more people than they ever will playing in the local pub.

And not everyone agrees that the threat is yet so great: "It is still a long way down the line that hardware that you can download on will be as ubiquitous as the hi-fi," says John Harris of music magazine Select. "And it's wrong that the copyright police should be stamping on 14-year old bedroom enthusiasts."

One 25-year old on-line pirate music specialist is unconcerned about the new lobby group: "By the time they have changed the law to deal with MP3 there will be some new technology along that their law won't cover. It all changes too fast for them."

Stealing Radio head from the Internet:

<p>Home</p> <p>Buttons</p> <p>Free Albums</p> <p>Pics</p>	<p>What's new</p> <p>10 MP3, 4 compressed videos, 10 concert CDs, 1 video</p> <p>Songs or whole albums of CD quality sound</p> <p>Posters and album covers</p>	<p>Sites</p> <p>Great Radiohead Radiohead the CDs</p> <p>Search among 300 sites containing code words "Radiohead" and "MP3"</p> <p>Radiohead at Eason Sam's Radiohead Site Unofficial Radiohead</p> <p>1-2 Radiohead Sites Unofficial Radiohead</p>
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Woodward lawyer in row over guilt claim

By David Osborne
in New York

A LAWYER who represented British nanny Louise Woodward yesterday rejected claims that she told a United States police officer who arrested her for drunken driving that she now believed her client guilty of murder.

"It is not true, it is a fabrication," the British-born lawyer, Elaine Whitfield-Sharp, insisted yesterday.

Ms Whitfield-Sharp, who admitted the drunken driving offence in court in Massachusetts on Tuesday, was the junior member of the defence team in last year's trial of Woodward for the murder of baby Matthew Eappen, which drew immense international attention.

Woodward has been living in the lawyer's home in Boston pending the outcome of appeals.

Ms Whitfield-Sharp was pulled over for erratic driving last Friday.

The police officer involved is understood to have stated in his official report that Ms Whitfield-Sharp complained of having been under unusual stress because she had reached the conclusion since the trial's end that Ms Woodward was indeed guilty of murdering the boy, who



Whitfield-Sharp's client, nanny Louise Woodward

died from massive head wounds aged just eight months while in her care.

The police report was not publicly available yesterday, making verification of the officer's alleged statement impossible.

While such a claim could be deeply embarrassing to the defence, it could have no material bearing on the case, if only because of Ms Whitfield-Sharp's state of intoxication at the time.

Woodward was found guilty on 31 October last year of second-degree murder in the

case and given a mandatory life sentence.

Later, however, Judge Hiller Zobel reduced the conviction to one of manslaughter and ruled that the 279 days she had already served in prison was sufficient punishment.

Since an appeal hearing at the highest Massachusetts court on 6 March this year, Woodward has remained in the state, forbidden access to her passport, awaiting the outcome.

The court's panel of seven judges, which is expected to release its ruling any day, has a range of possible options, including confirming Judge Zobel's decision, which would allow Woodward to return home, or reinstating the life sentence.

Offering a starkly different version of what occurred at her arrest last Friday, Ms Whitfield-Sharp said it was the arresting officer, a state trooper, who introduced Woodward to their conversation.

She insisted yesterday: "I was stopped and the trooper said to me: 'You have been drinking, because of the Louise Woodward case.'"

"I said: 'That was back in October and this is May.' He then said 'If you have sex with me, I'll let you off.' I told him to f--- off."

Tonsil patients put up in hotel

CHILDREN who have had operations to remove their tonsils are being put up in a hotel to free up hospital beds.

Derriford hospital in Plymouth, Devon, is paying £60 a night for the children to stay in the hotel with their parents. So far six have enjoyed bed and breakfast just ten minutes from the hospital so that they can get back quickly if there are any complications.

It is believed to be the first scheme of its sort in the country and if it is successful it may be extended to other patients.

Terri West, spokeswoman for the hospital, said the aim of the scheme was to free up beds rather than to save money on care. "This is still very much a trial and it involves patients who do not need medical care. It is for their reassurance if they live some distance away from the hospital that they feel they can come back if they need."

There are no medical facilities at the hotel but the hospital says they are not needed because all of the patients involved are fit to be discharged.

"Obviously nobody will be discharged unless they are fit to be," said Ms West.

Transport by Nicky Clarke.

The Colours: 1. Beauty's outfit; 2. Beauty's mother's outfit; 3. Beauty's pack of Nicky Clarke Sport Protein Shampoo from the new Sport range; 4. Beauty's hair; 5. Beauty's hair; 6. Beauty's hair; 7. Beauty's hair; 8. Beauty's hair; 9. Beauty's hair; 10. Beauty's hair; 11. Beauty's hair; 12. Beauty's hair; 13. Beauty's hair; 14. Beauty's hair; 15. Beauty's hair; 16. Beauty's hair; 17. Beauty's hair; 18. Beauty's hair; 19. Beauty's hair; 20. Beauty's hair; 21. Beauty's hair; 22. Beauty's hair; 23. Beauty's hair; 24. Beauty's hair; 25. Beauty's hair; 26. Beauty's hair; 27. Beauty's hair; 28. Beauty's hair; 29. Beauty's hair; 30. Beauty's hair; 31. Beauty's hair; 32. Beauty's hair; 33. Beauty's hair; 34. Beauty's hair; 35. Beauty's hair; 36. Beauty's hair; 37. Beauty's hair; 38. Beauty's hair; 39. Beauty's hair; 40. Beauty's hair; 41. Beauty's hair; 42. Beauty's hair; 43. Beauty's hair; 44. Beauty's hair; 45. Beauty's hair; 46. Beauty's hair; 47. Beauty's hair; 48. Beauty's hair; 49. 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Japanese Emperor's visit: Former prisoners of war turn their backs as demands for apology and compensation grow

Welsh chorus of disapproval greets Akihito

SCORES of former prisoners of war turned their backs in protest yesterday as Emperor Akihito arrived at Cardiff Castle as part of his state visit to Britain.

Many former British servicemen, some decorated with medals and former prison camp badges, jeered as the Emperor and his wife - accompanied by the Prince of Wales - were driven through the castle gates where they met local dignitaries and were entertained by a programme of traditional Welsh music from the Mass Choir of the Welsh Association of Male Voice Choirs.

The protest by Welsh war veterans followed a similar demonstration in London on Tuesday when hundreds of PoWs turned their backs on the Emperor and his wife as they rode by in the Queen in a royal carriage.

One of those who attended yesterday's protest, Wynndham Jeremiah, 78, from Newbridge, said he was pleased with the way it had been carried out. "It is the only form of protest we have got. I was a bit surprised about the booing but turning your back on the Japanese is an insult and that's what we wanted to do. We ex-servicemen usually protest in a quiet way."

Oliver Davis, 82, also from Newbridge, said he felt he had

done his bit in protesting at the Emperor's visit. He said: "I wasn't in the Far East but I am here for those who were. I was in the Royal Pioneer Corps in Europe but I felt it was my duty to be present today."

"I don't think we will achieve anything but it is still good to make a stand."

One former PoW bumped into the widow of a fellow serviceman who spent three and a half years with him in camps in the Far East.

Glyn Thomas, 76, from Neath, recognised the number on a prison camp ID badge pinned to the jacket of his fellow inmate's widow.

Monica Yabsley was at the protest on behalf of her husband Ray, an ex-RAF man who died 11 years ago.

She said: "It was lovely to meet someone who went through the same thing as my husband."

Japanese teacher Sachi Ebisu, 21, from Osaka, said she was "saddened" by the protest.

Currently teaching Japanese in Cardiff, she said: "I hope this doesn't strain relations between our two countries."

"I do not think the Emperor or his responsibility for what happened during the war because he was just a little boy. Many soldiers used the name of the Emperor, but after the war

they were killed for the crime of abusing his name."

"I feel very embarrassed about this insult to him."

A handful of war veterans held up a Union flag and turned their backs as the Emperor and Empress left the castle yesterday afternoon.

Several hundred spectators raised a muted cheer as the motorcade drove away. Banners were held up bearing the messages "apologise", written in Japanese, and "compensate our ex-PoWs".

Liberal Democrat MP Mark Oaten, co-chairman of the all-party parliamentary group on Far East prisoners of war, claimed yesterday that the Emperor had moved closer towards an apology.

Mr Oaten said: "The Emperor's sympathy with former PoWs is becoming increasingly clear as his visit progresses."

"Inch by inch, the Emperor and his entourage have moved towards an apology, and I congratulate them on this sympathetic approach."

"Now that the Emperor has seen at first hand the strength of feeling that exists in this country, he surely must make his government realise that unless there is a clear apology from them, there will always be a thorn in the side of Anglo-Japanese relations."



Emperor Akihito in the grounds of Cardiff Castle yesterday. Right: Frederick Chandler, one of the veterans who protested outside. Photographs: Rob Straton



Ancient history in a modern world

By Lesley Downer

WHILE the British press gives front-page coverage to the veterans and their protest against Emperor Akihito's visit, the average Japanese newspaper reader is probably barely aware of it.

Japan, like Britain, has its right-wing press. The *Sankei* and the *Yomiuri*, both staunchly

monarchist and with a combined circulation of 12 million, described the PoWs' protest as an insult to the Emperor and attacked Britain for its barbarous colonial rule.

But, says Satoshi Hashimoto, London bureau chief of the mainstream *Asahi* newspaper, "Most Japanese do not feel offended or insulted. Emperor Hirohito [Akihito's father] was

special for Japanese, especially the older generation. But to Akihito we feel indifference. People are more interested in the World Cup."

"The Japanese government will never make direct payment to the prisoners of war. But they could make the gap smaller. The Japanese should understand the agony and strong feeling of the PoWs."

This is the same for Queen Elizabeth. She should apologise to the Boer War victims and to the Chinese people for the Opium Wars."

Yesterday's *Asahi* gave front page coverage to the Emperor's visit, with a picture of the Emperor and Empress standing with the Queen and Prince Philip and the headline "Imperial couple welcomed to

Britain". Only on the back page is there a picture of PoWs turning their backs in protest.

Apart from the World Cup, the big stories in Japan yesterday were the conviction of a member of the Aum cult responsible for the Tokyo subway gas killings and the glitzy wedding of pop megastar Seiko Matsuda. As for the PoWs - old news and fairly irrelevant to modern Japanese.

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IN BRIEF

Fresh assault claims against Wormwood Scrubs staff

INMATES at Wormwood Scrubs jail have made fresh claims of assault by staff, the Prison Service confirmed yesterday. A governor at the west London jail is looking at one complaint and the police team already probing claims of brutality at the jail is investigating another, a Prison Service spokesman said. It is understood that another complaint about an attack by staff has also been made. A source familiar with the claims said they were of "medium-scale" assaults. "We are not talking about repetitive brutality on the scale we witnessed before, these were one-off assaults."

Nine staff were suspended in March after an internal Prison Service inquiry was launched into claims that eight inmates were repeatedly assaulted by officers. The Prison Service spokesman said: "Prisons occasionally receive allegations made by prisoners about treatment by staff. All allegations are investigated by prison management or where appropriate the police."

Record fines after truancy

A COUPLE have been ordered to pay record fines because their son has been playing truant from school, it was revealed last night. David and Karen Seaton were fined a £1,000 after being taken to court for failing to ensure 15-year old Steven attended Marple Hall School, near Stockport.

The order - imposed at Stockport magistrates' court and in Mr and Mrs Seaton's absence - comes as a boost to Tony Blair's crackdown on truancy. Passing sentence magistrates said it was the "parents' responsibility to ensure that their child attended school."

Under the 1996 Education Act, the Department for Education and Employment requires that local authorities do everything within their power to enforce school attendance, and this can lead to prosecution.

BBC crew detained in Yemen

A BBC foreign correspondent and his crew were being detained by Yemeni authorities last night after they were discovered filming without permission. The crew have been held in San'a, the capital, since Tuesday afternoon. They were investigating the recent outbreak of kidnappings for BBC 2's *Correspondent*. The BBC would not name the crew until their families had been informed, but the correspondent for the region, Rageh Omaar was named late yesterday as one of the team.

Cut-price World Cup kit

OFFICIAL England and Scotland World Cup shirts went on sale at reduced prices at Tesco yesterday in its latest assault on inflated prices for brand-name products. Tesco is selling the kit for 25 per cent less than other retailers. The shirts were bought secretly, without makers' approval, from wholesalers in Europe in the "grey market", which is so named because it is neither illegal nor accepted business practice.

Joyriders wreak havoc

JOYRIDERS caused thousands of pounds of damage when they went on the rampage - in a stolen armoured personnel carrier. They smashed fences, ploughed through hedges and banks, flattened a forestry plantation, knocked down dozens of mature trees and trashed an ex-army jeep at Highlands Park outdoor centre in Wiltshire over the Bank Holiday weekend.

Students to repay hoax cash

THIRTEEN fine arts students from the University of Leeds who were awarded a £1,126 grant by the university's student union for a "contemporary art show" which turned out to be a hoax trip to the Costa del Sol, have told the union's executive committee that they are to repay the money tomorrow.

Jesuits pay for priest's appeal

THE Society of Jesus is to pay the legal costs of a self-confessed paedophile to appeal against a conviction, it was confirmed last night.

But the society said the move did not mean it thought Jesuit priest Father James Channing-Pearce was innocent.

The 57-year-old priest was jailed for five years in September for indecent assault on four of his pupils at Stonyhurst Roman Catholic college in Lancashire.

He admitted assaults on three of them but denied a number of attacks on one boy, now aged 21.

He intends to appeal against that conviction and the Society of Jesus will pay his legal costs, said Fr Ian Tomlinson, Provincial Secretary for Great Britain.

"We are not supporting his appeal because we think he is innocent. He thinks he is innocent and so in some sort of justice he has a right to have that tried, doesn't he?"

"We don't go around selecting people to support. He's a member of the society and so a member of a family. He's a member of the society and that's a full-time experience," he added.

"We simply do our best to make sure that we help him to be a person that does not offend again."

He went on: "When he leaves prison someone will have to look after him and we will do that."

At his trial at Preston Crown Court, Judge Reginald Lockett told Channing-Pearce: "You committed these offences over a period of time when you were in a position of special trust with the boys."

Channing-Pearce assaulted the four boys, aged between 12 and 16, in his study and in a tree house in the school grounds.

The boy whom the priest denied assaulting told the court he felt "scared and sick" after the attack.

Channing-Pearce was removed from the school in 1995 when a letter was received complaining about similar behaviour when he was working overseas a decade earlier.

Police were not called in until a year later after parents of one of the boys contacted the school to report an assault.

The judge told the priest he would remain on the national register of sex offenders for life.

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Select committee summons 'fat cats'

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

THREE directors who made personal fortunes totalling over £60m from the sale of privatised railway leasing companies have been summoned by a Commons select committee for an inquiry into the way the taxpayer was taken for a ride.

John Prideaux joined the ranks of the rail privatisation "fat cats" after making £15m from the sale of Angel Trains to the Royal Bank of Scotland.

Sandy Anderson, a former BR manager, made £36m after leading the buyout of the leasing company, Porterbrook, which the managers sold to Stagecoach for more than £800m. Andrew Jukes made £15.9m from a stake of £110,000 in the sale of a third leasing company, Eversholt, to Forward Trust.

All three directors have been called to appear next Wednesday by the public spending watchdog, the

Public Accounts Committee, which is investigating the privatisation of the three rolling stock leasing companies.

The Tory chairman of the committee, David Davis, is a former minister and ex-trouble shooter, with a reputation for tough talking. The committee inquiry could cause embarrassment for former Tory transport ministers, Sir George Young and Sir Brian Mawhinney — both now members of William Hague's Shadow Cabinet — who were responsible for the sell-offs.

But the permanent secretary at the Department of Transport, Andrew Turnbull, will be in the firing line over a damning report by the National Audit Office in March, this year, which said updated valuations were not made "because the then Government's overriding objective was to privatise the rolling stock leasing companies as soon as practicable".

The row over the sale and the creation of three multi-millionaires from

taxpayers' assets became an election issue last year, with the "fat cats" controversy contributing to the loss of credibility in John Major's government.

The directors will be questioned about the findings in the NAO report, which estimated that the taxpayer had received £1.8bn for companies which had a value of £2.9bn. It criticised the Department of Transport for failing to include a clawback provision on profits for any resale.

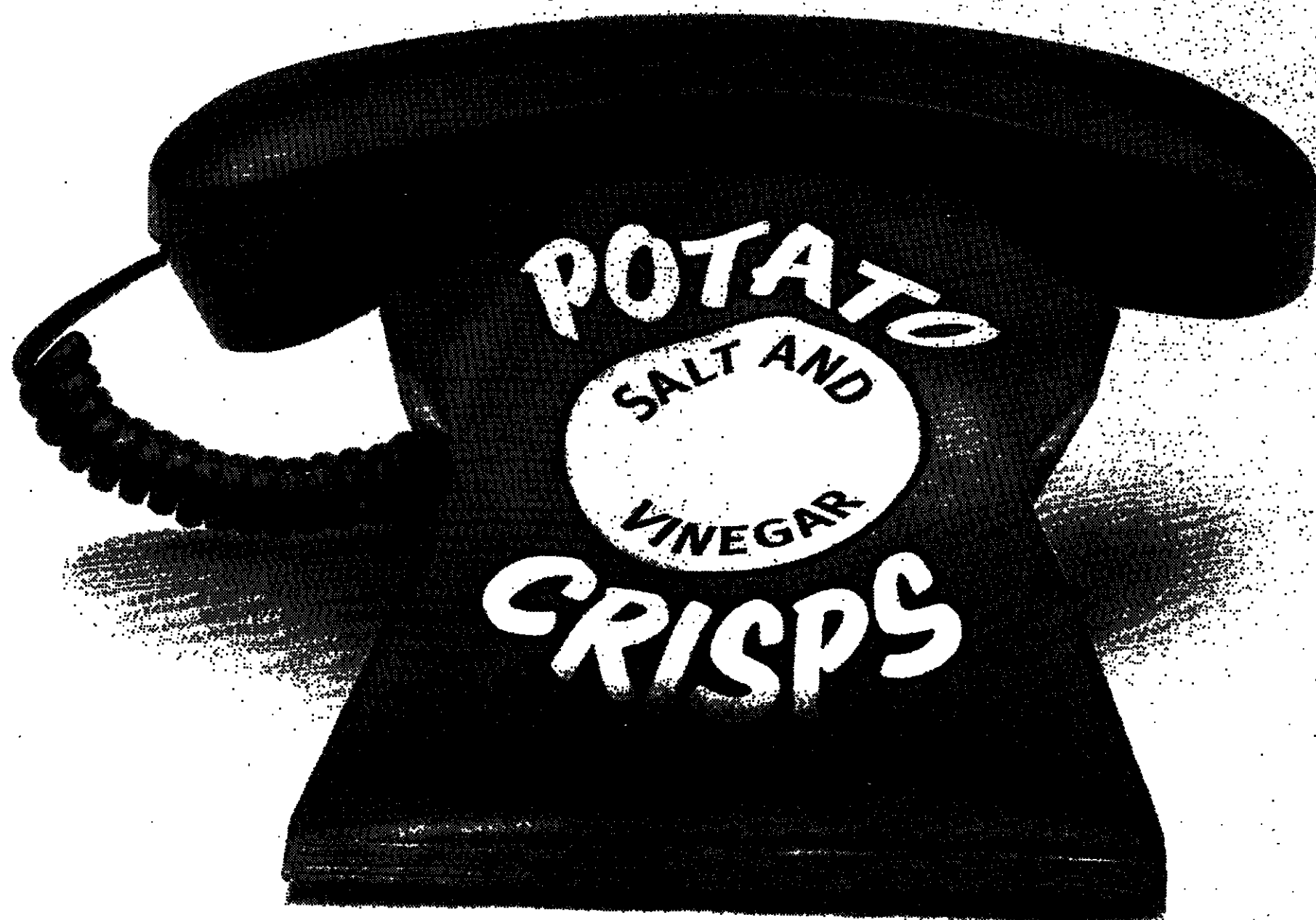
The cross-party committee will also be questioning Hambros who advised the Government on the sale, Brian Souter, the head of Stagecoach Holdings and others who bought the businesses including an official of the Royal Bank of Scotland.

The NAO report said the purchasers of Eversholt and Porterbrook were management and employee buy-out teams backed by financial institutions which aimed to realise a significant profit on investments within three to five years.



The Secretary of State for Defence, George Robertson, standing among troops from Ukraine and Poland on a joint training exercise at Stanford Army Training Base in Norfolk yesterday
Photograph: Adam Butler/PA

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Mystery of disappearing trainees

By Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

NEARLY one in eight of the young people leaving the government's flagship New Deal scheme have simply disappeared, according to official figures released yesterday.

Some may have gone to prison, others switched to alternative benefits, become pregnant, dropped out or finally acknowledged they had been working in the black economy. Andrew Smith, employment minister, also acknowledged that an unknown number may have become destitute.

Publishing the first government figures since pilots of the programme began in January, Mr Smith pledged to find out where the "disappeared" had ended up.

He conceded that the scheme so far had involved more carrot than stick. Just 35 of the 16,400 participants had been the subject of a "benefit penalty" for falling foul of the system. A further 135 cases have been referred to an independent adjudicator to decide whether the young people concerned should have 40 per cent of their state payments removed.

More than four out of 10 of the 18- to 24-year-olds on the scheme have secured jobs without any subsidy from the taxpayer, the figures revealed.

Just over one in 10 have gone into jobs which carry a £60 a week subvention to the employer from the state.

Since those figures were compiled for 12 "pathfinder" areas between January and March, the scheme has gone nationwide and another 18,000 young people who have been out of work six months or more, have joined the scheme.

Mr Smith said the initial figures should be treated with

caution, but there were early indications that the programme was "popular with young people and employers," and that it had enjoyed an encouraging start.

He pointed out that one in six of the young people on the scheme had volunteered to join early before they had been out of work for six months. He said 10,000 employers had signed up to provide subsidised jobs and the initiative had exceeded expectations.

Figures from the pilot stage of the programme showed 12,600 participants were still on the "Gateway" induction scheme which was designed to prepare the young people for one of four options: subsidised employment, full time education or training, a place on the government's environment task force or a job with a voluntary organisation.

The Employment Minister conceded however that the "ultimate test" would be how the programme compared with previous schemes and that would not become clear until the full results were available at the end of the year.

Angela Browning, Employment Spokeswoman, said she had reservations about the figures and said that many of the "hard cases" were still at the Gateway stage and would constitute the real test.

Conservatives would welcome the scheme if it provided real long term jobs for ex-offenders, the disabled and ethnic minorities she said.

The figures released yesterday showed that 2,000 jobs had been created from a programme worth £12m — £6,000 for each job, she said.

Her colleague David Willetts said the statistics seemed to show that young people had done no better under New Deal than they had done before.

UK attacked over human rights policy

THE United Kingdom falls short of international human rights standards, Amnesty International said today.

The Government's Human Rights Bill, going through Parliament, will incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law. But the human rights pressure group Amnesty wants the Government to go much further.

"The Government needs to ensure that its own house is in order if it is to have effective influence on human rights in other countries," Amnesty's director, David Bull, said.

Amnesty produced a report today to mark the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It stands as a challenge to the Foreign Secretary Robin Cook's claims to be following an ethical foreign policy.

The study highlights areas where the UK falls short of international standards on human rights and calls for the Gov-

ernment to act on eight points.

It says Britain should ratify and observe all international human rights treaties and standards and abolish the death penalty — which is still permitted, in theory, as a punishment for some crimes.

The Government should also take every opportunity to raise human rights issues with international bodies such as the United Nations and European Union and ensure human rights issues are adequately reflected in foreign policies.

Inside the UK, every asylum claim should be scrutinised carefully to ensure that foreigners at risk of persecution are not forced to go home. Arms exports must be continually monitored and controlled.

The Government should also increase the openness and transparency of its human rights policies and decision-making, and support the establishment of a permanent and independent International Criminal Court.

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Channel 4 presenter defies criticism of programme that showed family cooking and consuming afterbirth 'to reflect rituals of other cultures'

Placenta-eating film attacked by TV watchdog

By Janine Gibson
Media Correspondent

A TELEVISION show which showed people cooking and eating a human placenta has been criticised by the Broadcasting Standards Commission.

In a report published today, the BSC television watchdog said that *TV Dinners*, the Channel 4 programme presented by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, "breached a convention in a way which would have been disagreeable to many". A BSC statement added that, despite a pre-transmission warning about the programme's content, it "would have taken many viewers by surprise".

Nine complainants felt the programme, which attracted 2 million viewers when broadcast in February, was distasteful. A few referred to the practice of eating placenta as cannibalism.

Mr Fearnley-Whittingstall said yesterday: "There's nothing prescriptive about *TV Dinners* as a series; it's a fairly light-hearted mix of cooking and social documentary, it reflects all kinds of different approaches, including people who feel the need to break a food taboo.

"If I wasn't getting a number of complaints I would consider I wasn't doing my job. It was one of the stories I most enjoyed doing. There's a lot of complacency in the way we ap-

proach our diet and food production, which is why I'm quite happy to be seen eating squirrels and, indeed, placenta. People need to be shocked to make them think about the issues in eating food."

Of the family who ate the placenta in the programme, Mr Fearnley-Whittingstall said that it was obvious it was "a very meaningful thing for them, something they really believed in and not done for shock value". The *Clear family* decided that, to mark their first grandchild's birth, family and friends would eat the placenta to reflect rituals and customs from other cultures. The idea was to construct a ceremony in which the guests would symbolically join in their gene pool by sharing part of the baby, Indie-Mo's placenta. The family wrote to the programme's producers, Ricochet Films, for recipe advice.

Consumption of the afterbirth can be traced to 1556, when a traveller to the New World reported that Indians ate the placenta immediately after giving birth. Cooking and eating placentas is widely practised among native peoples of Brazil and certain Maori tribes.

In Europe, it was regularly added to chicken broth and served to recently delivered women until the mid-19th century. More recently, in her book *Alternative Maternity*, Nicky

Wesson advised new mothers to eat the placenta to prevent post-natal depression.

The programme's researchers also contacted the Department of Health, which issued a statement: "If a healthy woman has given birth without any complications, there is no reason why she should not do this. It is a matter of personal choice."

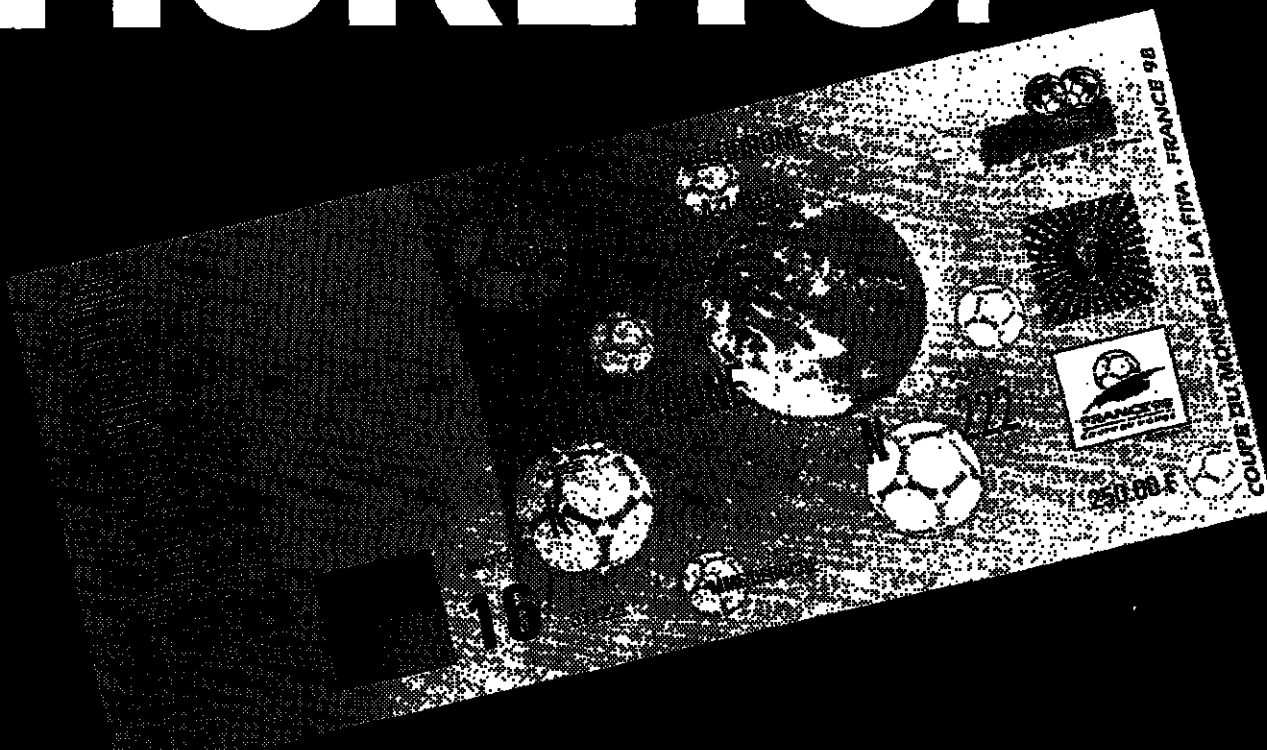
Channel 4 did not respond to the BSC statement other than to say that it stood by the programme, as it had throughout the furor it created before transmission.



The presenter of *TV Dinners*, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, with the placenta dish, decorated with a model of a baby

Photograph: Channel 4

15,000 EXTRA WORLD CUP TICKETS.



UNFORTUNATELY, THEY'RE ALL GOING TO ONE MAN.

Agency backs drug-test kits

By Jason Bernetto
Crime Correspondent

A NATIONAL drugs agency yesterday defended the use of kits to test ecstasy and other illegal substances after the Government's drug "czar" criticised them as "immoral" and called for them to be banned.

Keith Hellawell, the UK Drugs Co-ordinator, reacted angrily to the news that a company was selling the kits for as little as £5 to people who wanted to check pills and powders before buying them.

The devices are sold by at least two firms - the Green Party and a private company - and can detect several drugs, including pure ecstasy or MDMA, amphetamine and a hallucinogen called 2CB. The substances are identified by pouring a chemical on to a tiny amount of the drug, which changes colour and be compared with an identification chart.

Mr Hellawell said he wanted the kits banned "because they give people a false sense of security. They do not make ecstasy or any other drug less dangerous. It seems to be an immoral money-making venture."

But Mike Goodman, director of Release, the national drug and legal organisation, disagreed. "We believe these testing kits should be made available to young people. It's a pragmatic measure and has

some benefit in reducing the amount of rogue drugs taken and allows people to have a better idea of what they taking."

However, he warned: "These kits are not a panacea - they don't tell you the strength of the drug, or what impurities are present. It should be used as part of a risk reduction policy."

One of the kits, known as Easy Test, which went on sale a couple of months ago via mail order and the Internet, has already sold about 2,000 at £5 each. The kits can recognise six different types of drugs, and can be used about 15 times. The Green Party product costs £15, or £34 for a more accurate model.

The devices were first developed in the Netherlands and used as a method of detecting adulterated pills. Dealers frequently mix drugs such as speed with other substances, including baking soda or headache tablets and try to sell them as ecstasy. Several deaths have been linked to the mixing of unknown drugs.

Dylan Trump, who sells the East Test kits, told the BBC Radio 4 *Today* programme: "We are not encouraging people to use the drug, merely providing more information about the drugs they are taking."

But Jan Betts, the mother of Leah Betts who died in 1995 after taking ecstasy on her 18th birthday, said Mr Trump's claims were "complete nonsense" and "irresponsible".

Girl, 5, accuses uncle, 12, of rape

A FIVE-YEAR-OLD girl told a court yesterday how she was raped when she went out to play with two 12-year-old boys on a Sunday afternoon.

The girl, speaking through a video screen, how she was taken to a cemetery in Leeds on 14 September last year when the boys, her 12-year-old uncle whom she lived with and another 12-year-old, took it in turns to have sex with her.

The girl's uncle, who is now aged 13, has admitted indecent assault. The other boy, still aged 12, denies rape.

Nicholas Campbell, for the prosecution, told the jury that the girl kicked and screamed as she was raped. He said the 12-year-old raped the girl the first

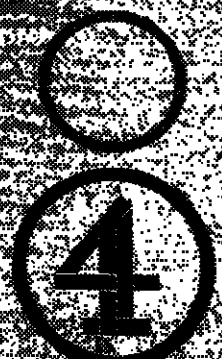
time and then threatened the girl's uncle that he would burn his clothes if he did not also have sex with the girl.

After the uncle had sex with her the first boy raped her for a second time. The girl said that she thought the boys were going to kill her.

Questioned by defence barrister Timothy Stead, the girl denied she had been playing games in the cemetery and insisted the boys had had sex with her.

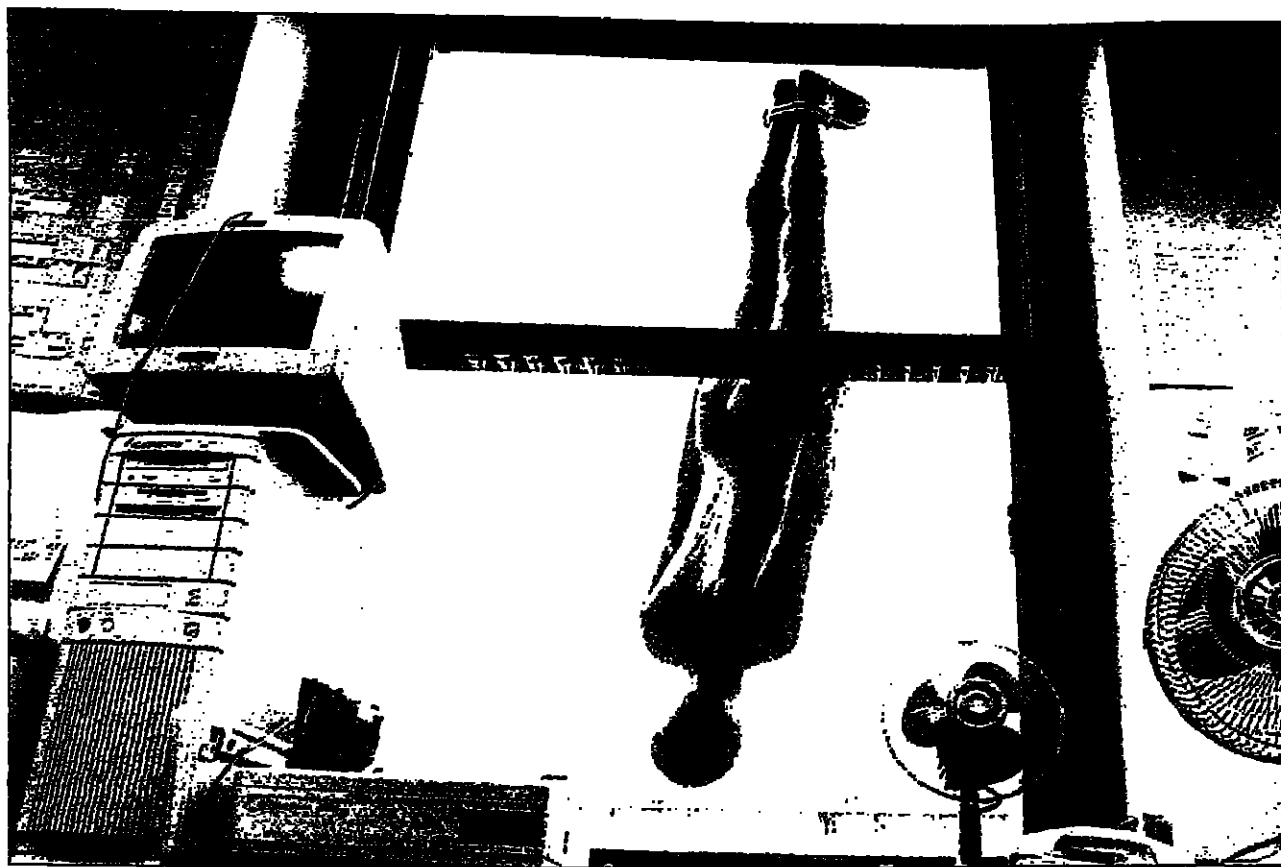
The girl's uncle, giving evidence for the prosecution, said he had got on top of her - after the other boy - when he was threatened, but did not have full sex.

The case was adjourned until today.



DISPATCHES TONIGHT 9PM

Britain's oldest art institution is in the black and embracing change, says **David Lister**



Up-ended art at the RA. An Antony Gormley statue, seen from the Royal Society of Chemistry Photograph: David Rose

Royal Academy goes out on a limb to attract young audience

TODAY is not only the start of the season for Middle England's painters. It is also the start of a cultural rehabilitation for Britain's oldest art institution.

When the Royal Academy opens its doors in Piccadilly for the first private view of the annual Summer Show, Sir Philip Dowson, the president, and David Gordon, the secretary, will be able to greet friends and sponsors, press and critics with beaming smiles and promises of a cutting-edge future.

The institution is moving back into the black after mounting debts. Craigie Aitchison, the artist who resigned as an RA in high dudgeon last year, has come back to the fold. "Sensation", the exhibition of radical young British artists, attracted huge crowds. The latest elections to the academy show a spirited attempt to embrace the new. One new RA, David Mach, predicts "raunchy" times ahead.

Six months is evidently a long time in art. Last autumn, the Royal Academy was in crisis: the culmination of 12 months during which its bursar had been

shall go on campaigning to get him sacked." There were even reports of a fist fight between two of the Academy's most senior officials.

Imprisonment, fisticuffs and a threatened castration: it was not what Sir Joshua Reynolds had in mind 230 years ago when he established the art world's most senior body.

Last year's crisis at one stage looked like destroying the relatively new regime under Sir Philip Dowson, the architect, and David Gordon, the former ITN chief executive. The fault was not entirely theirs. Competition for the declining pot of sponsorship cash has grown ever more intense.

With no permanent collection of its own to lend, the Academy needs all Mr Rosenthal's celebrated network of contacts to secure the best exhibitions.

The academy's membership is indeed ageing and many of the 80-strong membership could not understand why the Academy was hosting an exhibition of young Turks brought in from the Saatchi collection instead of honouring its own.

The annual report shows that last year the Academy cut its accumulated deficit to £1.8m, returning an unexpected operating surplus of £175,000. Sir Philip adds that plans for the future included a £100,000 feasibility study into taking over the nearby vacated Museum of Mankind, and turning it into an educational centre.

The election of David Mach, 42, a controversial sculptor responsible for a £760,000 locomotive made of house bricks, is a clear signal from the academy that it wants to embrace change, as do the elections of two other artists in their forties, Richard Deacon, a sculptor, and Stephen Farthing, the head of the Ruskin School of Drawing, at Oxford.

Mr Mach says: "For me, it's got to get rid of its conservative reputation. If we can chip away at that it's going to be quite a raunchy place. I don't see why it has to be stuffy. They have to go for young people. You have to get younger sooner or later. It's obvious because the rest of them are going to die."

That is logic of a sort. The academy's quest for youth, blockbusters and sharper business acumen also has a sort of logic to it. But it remains a short-term solution. The academy, which makes no pronouncements about the state of art, and whose own school has lost its pre-eminent place in art education, has yet to find a role and purpose in today's mercurial art world - a world which does not respect authority and tradition and, as Damien Hirst's remarks showed, does not want to be a member of an exclusive club with no power and little authority.

The present regime has not yet made a statement of changing philosophy to accompany the improving balance sheets.

Euro rules threaten art market profits

By Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

THE multi-million pound London art market is at real risk of being broken up by a new Brussels "tax", both the Government and MPs said yesterday.

In spite of protests by British ministers - Labour as well as Tory - and the European Parliament, the Commission is pushing ahead with plans to impose an artists' levy of up to 4 per cent on the resale of any work of art from next January.

It is expected that the proposal could drive force sales of more than £370m out of London - driving art owners off to auctioneers and dealers into levy-free havens like New York or Switzerland.

The levy would apply to the work of any artist who is an EU national, or the national of member state who has been dead for

less than 70 years. It therefore covers work by artists ranging from Picasso, Matisse and Chagall through to Lucian Freud.

But a report from the Commons European Legislation Committee warned yesterday: "The Government appears to be short of allies amongst the other member states in its opposition to this proposal."

Marking their disapproval of the legislative process, the all-party committee put down a protest marker, blocking British ministerial agreement. Ian McCartney, the industry minister, indicated, however, that there was no risk of the move getting his vote.

"The amended proposal makes no concession to UK concerns that the proposal would damage the competitiveness of London's international art market in relation to its main competitor - New York - and other third-country

markets," he told the MPs. It has been estimated that the levy would slash the earnings of London auctioneers and dealers by up to £68m a year, with the potential loss of about 5,000 jobs, and only £2m going to British artists or their heirs.

"Moreover," Mr McCartney added, "experience abroad shows that the majority of artists would get little, if anything. Royalties would go mainly to well-known artists or, more likely, to their heirs. The costs of the proposal in terms of damaging Community art markets would considerably outweigh the benefits to individual artists."

The European Parliament attempted to soften the blow by suggesting new price bands, lower royalty rates, and royalties that would apply only to profits, rather than the entire selling price - but all those changes were rejected by the

Commission. Anthony Browne, chairman of the British Art Market Federation, told *The Independent* last night: "What we are saddled with is an internal market measure which is seeking to create a level playing field within Europe, while ignoring the global market in which we have to compete."

The move was completely illogical, he said. If it was argued that the Germans were at a disadvantage compared with London because they had the levy, the same disadvantage would apply to London compared with New York, when the levy was applied to London.

Mr Browne said: "The market will move and that is a shame because it is something we are very good at in this country." If Brussels wanted a level playing field, he added, it would be much simpler to abolish the levy in other EU countries.

£1m price tag on Gormley work

A CENTREPIECE of the Summer Exhibition will be a sculpture by Antony Gormley, who has valued it at £1m, writes David Lister.

Critical Mass comprises 60 lifesize cast-iron figures each weighing a tonne. The body casts are in the centre and around the outside of the courtyard of the Royal Academy. They were moulded from Gormley's body in 12 distinct positions. Fourteen of the casts are suspended from the facade of Burlington House and neighbouring buildings.

Hitherto the highest price commanded at auction by the former Turner Prize winner is £23,000. He sold maquettes of his *Angel of the North* for £145,000 at the London Art Fair in January.

sent to prison for embezzlement of £400,000 as the deficit climbed to £3m. Four academicians resigned over "Sensation" and there was not exactly a rush to take their place.

Rachel Whiteread, who represented Britain at the Venice Biennale, was elected to the academy, but turned it down. Damien Hirst added that he would never join such a "pompous and boring" organisation. There were pickets outside the "Sensation" exhibition in protest over a depiction on the walls of Myra Hindley, the Moors Murderer.

Norman Rosenthal, the exhibitions organiser, was censured by a meeting of the Academicians. He said publicly he doubted that one of the resignees, John Ward, would be judged "a great artist". Mr Ward said: "I want his balls. I

we must be

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Firefighters reach for water guns

WATER guns instead of unwieldy hoses are being used by firefighters for the first time in Britain in a pilot scheme in West Yorkshire.

Firefighters at Leeds yesterday demonstrated how the guns could be used to put out a blazing car (pictured), and said that they would be particularly useful in areas where it was difficult to run hoses because of distance from a water supply.

The water guns, which are made in Holland, are carried on the officer's back and run on compressed air, firing blasts of water from a 10-litre pack. They are said to work most effectively when used in pairs with the jets aimed at the base of a fire.

If the West Yorkshire trials are successful, the water guns, which cost £2,500 each, will be used by fire brigades across the country.

Photograph: Peter Byrne/Guzzell



Japanese cars pose greater injury risk

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

OCCUPANTS of some of the best-selling Far Eastern hatchback cars face an "unacceptably" high risk of serious injury in accidents, according to the results of official European crash protection tests.

Popular Japanese car marques Honda, Suzuki and their Korean counterparts Daewoo and Hyundai were all cited as manufacturers that needed to "improve safety standards".

Twelve models were rammed into deformable walls to simulate crash conditions - part of the European New Car Assessment Programme (Euro NCAP) - at the Transport Research Laboratory.

European car-makers topped the safety tables. The Audi A3, Renault Megane and the VW Golf achieved the maximum four stars in the tests. Experts said these car-makers had the advantage of newer models - while many of the Far Eastern makes were based on older designs.

This argument was used to explain the poor performance of the £17,000 Honda Civic. According to a spokesman for Honda, the model has been designed in 1992. "The Civic is in the second half of its working life - it is unfair to compare it with brand new cars," said a spokesman.

Others chose to question the legitimacy of the tests themselves. "These tests do have to be seen for what they are. They are not real life situations," said a spokesman for Daewoo,

whose £11,000 Lanos failed because the driver faced "an unacceptably high risk of chest injury".

However, in an interview in this week's *Autocar* magazine, Professor Adrian Hobbs, chairman of the Euro NCAP technical working group, defended the tests.

Professor Hobbs said while the tests could not represent every type of accident, they did represent the most important ones.

He also denied a suggestion that advice from car companies had been ignored. He went on: "We had a meeting in July 1996 with the industry, which was a technical meeting. It was not very helpful because the industry basically came along to tell us why we shouldn't do an NCAP programme."

The real test for many manufacturers will come this October - when new models face tough new standards for side impact collisions.

Even the best performers were far from perfect. The Consumers' Association said the Audi A3 - although one of the highest scorers and with a very stable body shell - still had room for improvement in the frontal impact knee injury area.

"Car manufacturers have a long way to go to improve safety standards," said Andrew McIlwraith, editor of the *CA's Which?* Car magazine.

He added: "Although we've witnessed encouraging improvements in car safety design, we hope these widely publicised tests will force manufacturers to take safety more seriously."



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RAC ex-members try carpetbagging

By Glenda Cooper
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

MORE than 500 former members of the Royal Automobile Club have tried to rejoin since it announced the sale of its roadside rescue service. Full members will get a payout of about £30,000 when the sale goes ahead later this year to the US company Cendant.

The ex-members say they should be able to rejoin because the RAC has a provision in its rules giving automatic readmission for those who rejoin within three years of resigning. But yesterday the RAC said only those with full membership and voting rights on 27 March, when they imposed a moratorium to prevent carpetbagging, would be eligible for the windfall. While the club would welcome back former members, they would not be eligible for the payout, a spokesman said.

"For those who have resigned their membership, what the rules actually say is that if you wish to rejoin within three years you may do so without undergoing the formalities of the election procedure such as being nominated by two existing members. It doesn't mean you are automatically a member;

you still have to reapply." Only the 12,000 full members of the RAC, once known as the Vatican of motordom, will benefit from the Cendant sale. They include the Tory MPs Shaun Woodward and Peter Luff and the president of the Liberal Democrats, Robert MacLennan. Others set to receive the bonuses are the designer Paul Smith and former Formula One champion Damon Hill.

Under its two-tier membership structure the 6 million "members" of the rescue service, who contribute the bulk of RAC profits, will not benefit and need not be consulted.

Overseas members are also excluded from the payout and have threatened legal action to force the RAC to extend payments to them. Next week there is expected to be a High Court hearing at which Jeffrey Rose, the ousted chairman, will seek an extraordinary general meeting, which the board of directors opposes.

The Automobile Association said disgruntled RAC members were turning to it, with figures up 50 per cent. Since launching an advertising campaign two weeks ago it had received 4,200 calls from RAC members.

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Star Wars science brings space into close-up

The first pictures produced by a giant telescope have stunned astronomers, writes Charles Arthur

A TECHNOLOGY developed for Ronald Reagan's Star Wars missile defence system has delivered astonishing results in its first practical use - in the world's biggest ground-based telescope.

The European Southern Observatory (ESO) yesterday released the first images from its £374m Very Large Telescope (VLT) project, which will use an array of four telescopes each 8.2m (27ft) across to produce images of distant stars and perhaps their planets.

Among the first images is a stunning picture of the Butterfly Nebula, the remnants of a huge star that has blown off much of its hydrogen "fuel" in glowing gas clouds, while the original star has shrunk to a "white dwarf" in the centre of the picture. The details available, from three exposures each lasting 10 minutes, is as good as any from previous telescopes.

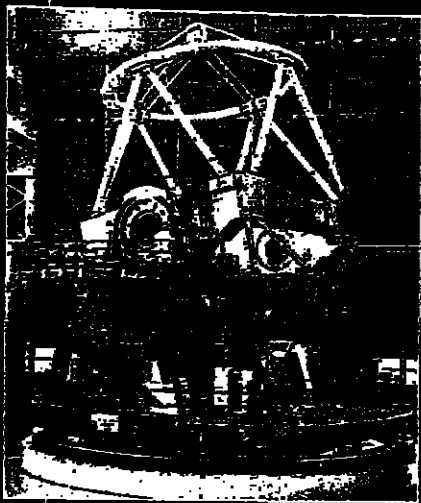
But this is only the beginning. When completed in around 2001, the VLT will consist of four identical telescopes, and be capable of resolving objects so tiny that it is like picking out an astronaut on the surface of the Moon, 400,000km (250,000 miles) away.

The key to its powers of resolution will be that the optical signals from the mirrors of the four telescopes will be combined, so that they function like a single mirror 16m across. That is bigger than any built on Earth and much larger than that on the orbiting Hubble Space Telescope - and thus gives rise to its extraordinary resolution.

The ESO team have far-sighted goals for it. One possibility is to capture images of giant planets that, scientists are increasingly sure, orbit distant stars in our galaxy.

Ricardo Giacconi, director-general of the ESO, said before the first results appeared that "the VLT's investigations will

The most powerful telescope in the world

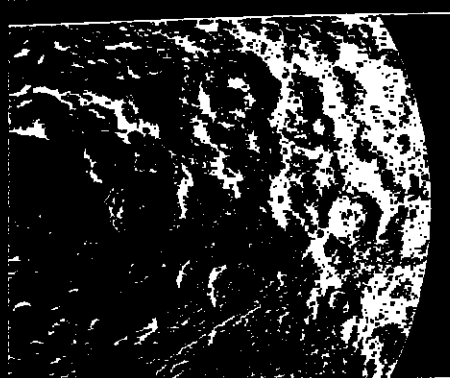


The Butterfly Nebula, pictured by the VLT (source: ESO) and (inset) the first of four telescopes comprising the VLT

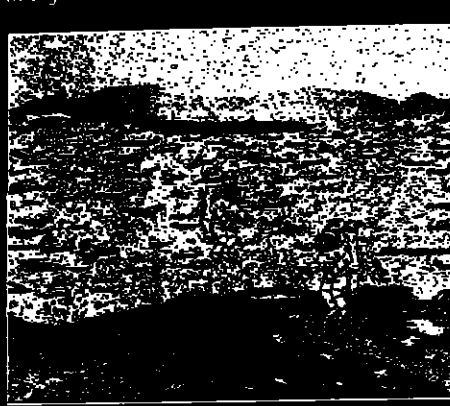
What you would see with...



...the naked eye



...a good amateur telescope



...in theory, with the completed VLT

shed light on how likely it is that conditions for the emergence of life exists in the universe". Another aim is to look at light from stars formed when the universe was very young - perhaps just 5 per cent of its present age.

The Star Wars technology was originally developed by American military engineers to allow laser weapons to keep their beam steady on a missile "target". Now its use in the mirrors of the telescopes means

that they can be based on the ground rather than having to go to the expense of putting them into orbit, as with NASA's Hubble telescope.

Normally, ground-based telescopes have problems because gravity makes their mirrors sag, and they also have to compensate for the effects of the atmosphere, where air layers make images tremble (making the stars appear to twinkle). The VLT overcomes this by us-

ing tiny motors which can individually move elements of the mirror. A computer monitors the reflection of a reference star in some part of the scene in different parts of the main mirror: if that seems to shift, the motor moves a part of the mirror so that the image remains stable. The same system is also used to compensate for the sagging of the mirror under its own weight.

The ESO has also minimised

atmospheric problems by building the VLT on the summit of the Cerro Paranal mountain in the Atacama desert, Chile, one of the driest places on Earth.

The UK does not belong to ESO, and has not been involved in the VLT's construction over the past 10 years. But non-member countries can participate, and individual astronomers can submit requests for telescope time. The Astronomer Royal, Sir Martyn

Rees, of Cambridge University, thinks UK involvement in Gemini - a twin-telescope project, with 8m telescopes in Chile and Hawaii - makes up for it. "It is a pity the UK does not have a larger stake in next-generation telescopes. But I am not sure whether the British community would wish to be involved in the VLT rather than in an other large-telescope project."

A "sunquake" 40,000 times more powerful than the earthquake which devastated San Francisco in 1906 has been observed, it was disclosed yesterday. It was first proof that solar flares produce seismic waves in the Sun's interior similar to terrestrial earthquakes.

However, a quake on the Sun is on a different scale from any on Earth. The one spotted by the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory spacecraft produced waves nearly two miles high, travelling at 250,000mph

over the Sun's surface. The quake, following a moderate-sized solar flare on in July 1996, appeared like ripples spreading from a rock dropped into a pool of water.

The findings were reported in the *Nature* science journal by researchers from Glasgow University and Stanford University, California, and presented at a news conference at the spring meeting of the American Geophysical Union in Boston.

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Young stroke victims ignored because of age

By Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

MORE than 1,000 people under 30 die from strokes in Britain every year, and medical experts warned yesterday that many young sufferers do not get the help they need.

Research presented to the European Stroke Conference in Edinburgh dispelled the myth that the disease affects only the elderly, revealing that 10,000 people of working age suffer strokes each year.

Yesterday, a charity for young stroke survivors, Different Strokes, called for more attention to be given to their needs.

Donal O'Kelly, the director, said: "This is a problem that has been ignored. Many young survivors do not receive full support from the health services because stroke is perceived to be a problem of the elderly. We help some of these people who were in the prime of their lives by teaching them to talk, walk and live a normal life."

It is four years since Amanda Crawford had her stroke and she is still only 30. She went to bed with a headache and a blood clot started to close off a vital artery in her brain while she was asleep. She got up feeling groggy and groped her way to the shower. Her father heard her dropping and breaking things and burst into the bath-

room. He took one look and rushed her to hospital.

Ms Crawford became one of thousands of young people struck down by the condition that is thought to affect only the elderly.

For those who survive, rebuilding their lives presents huge problems. Some have to cope with a permanent physical disability and all have to live with the emotional scars of the trauma they have endured.

Ms Crawford, who is Canadian and was treated in Toronto, has no memory of her first two days in hospital. She was unable to speak or walk and her left side was paralysed. "For a long time I didn't even know I had had a stroke. All the doctors could say was - you're so young."

She had a brain scan and was given clot busting drugs. After 10 days she was discharged and spent three months in a rehabilitation hostel. When she returned home she decided she needed a fresh start and moved to England.

"My sister and I had been planning to open a coffee shop. We had been looking at properties and then this happened. I had been waiting to start my life. In hospital, the physiotherapists told me I could learn to hobble but I would never be able to run for the bus again. When you are 26 that is not what you want to hear."

With a combination of determination and expert help she has recovered all her faculties, including the capacity to run, but she is still improving.

"To look at me you wouldn't know there was anything wrong but the emotional scars are still there. A lot of stroke survivors have this problem. Society says they look fine but the experience is devastating."

She had connections in London so that was where she chose to begin her new life. She now works for Different Strokes as regional development officer, setting up self-help groups around the country.

Each year over 120,000 people in the UK have a stroke for the first time. After one year, one third will have died, one third will have a serious disability and one third will recover.

Ms Crawford was one of the lucky ones. But she lives with the fear of a second stroke. Doctors had no explanation of why the first occurred - she was not on the contraceptive pill which has been linked with blood clots, she was not overweight and she did not smoke - but it increases the risk of a second.

"I have my blood pressure checked every six months. I make sure I stay fit and healthy and that there is no smoking and no excessive drinking. I do worry but I don't let it interfere with my life."



Amanda Crawford: "To look at me you wouldn't know there was anything wrong but the emotional scars are still there"

Photograph: Brian Harris

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Jail for man who took current from lamppost

A SCRAP dealer was jailed yesterday after being found guilty of diverting electricity from a lamppost to supply his house and business.

Ian Tordoff, 44, of Wakefield, West Yorkshire, who denied using electricity illegally between 1 June 1996 and 21 March 1997 and damaging property belonging to Yorkshire Electricity, was sentenced to four months at Leeds Crown Court following a four-day trial.

Yunus Valli, prosecuting, told the court an illegal connection was found at the base of a lamppost outside Tordoff's property with a cable leading into the premises.

Engineers from Yorkshire Electricity said that whoever had connected the electricity supply to the lamppost had taken a

considerable risk. Tordoff said he had no knowledge of the illegal connection and claimed he used generators to power the home he had lived at for eight years.

Passing sentence, Assistant Recorder Jennifer Kershaw QC, told Tordoff that stealing electricity was a serious offence and the connection he had made to the lamppost had put others at serious risk.

Tordoff also received a three-month jail sentence, to run concurrently, for the damage offence.

Scott Wilson, defending, said his client was a hard-working man seeking to provide for his family. He said less than £1,000-worth of electricity was involved. No order for compensation was made.

DAILY POEM

An Unlove Poem

By Julie Whitby

Not sure I want you anymore.
In my mouth, stale dry taste of cigarette,
In my head, unspoken memories
of one-night stands, chipped cups
and broken promises.
Not sure about you anymore.
The jilted lay-bys littered with condoms
and English badly spoken:
the cities noisy, greasy with
preposterous Pizza Parlours
and not one, spiralling mistily,
cathedral.
Oh where has gone
my queenly lawn
and roses perfumed -
plangent with - desire?
Liar. Don't want you anymore
falls shyly as the weather.
Défense de cracher au dehors.
Hate you, from now on.

This poem comes from the latest issue of *Ambit* magazine, edited by Martin Bax and featuring its usual rich mixture of poetry, prose, art and reviews. *Ambit* 152 costs £6 (or £22 for a year's subscription) from 17 Priory Gardens, London N6 3QY.

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The West's poisonous legacy

Chirac
denies
crisis unit

In Britain, depleted uranium is treated as a hazard. In Iraq, it still lies in the soil.
By Robert Fisk

ACROSS the sands of southern Iraq, the residue of Allied depleted uranium (DU) shells lies untreated in the soil. But in Britain, the Government goes to enormous lengths to protect its people from the results of test firing the very weapons suspected of causing an increase in cancers among Iraqi children.

A Government document, published almost six months ago but virtually ignored, reveals that test-firing of DU shells in Britain is carried out into an open-sided concrete building called the "tunnel" and that radioactive residues are washed off, sealed in cement and transported to Cumbria for disposal.

Iraqi doctors have long suspected that the children suffering from a four-fold increase in cancer in the south of the country - revealed in *The Independent* on 4 March - contracted their sickness from the Allied use of depleted uranium shells in the 1991 war. Tens of thousands of these projectiles were fired at the Iraqis in February 1991 in the fields south of the city of Basra, the fertile lands from which millions of Iraqis acquire their food. Many of the children dying of leukemia and lymphoma cancer were not even born when the war took place.

There has been no attempt by the US or Britain to find out the cause of the cancer outbreaks in Iraq, though US veterans' groups suspect DU shells, made of hard alloys which are tougher than tungsten and which ignite inside armoured vehicles, are responsible for thousands of cases of "Gulf War Syndrome" (including lymphoma cancers) among American soldiers who fought in the war. The US National Gulf Resource Centre says 40,000 US servicemen may have been exposed to depleted ura-



When Saddam's retreating forces ignited the Kuwait oilfields, there was a very visible environmental catastrophe. Now, a hidden poison is making its effect felt. Photograph: John Voos

nium dust on the battlefields. Tony Flint, acting chairman of the British Gulf War Veterans' and Families' Association says the same shells could be responsible for the death of 30 British veterans.

A review of the Ministry of Defence's radioactive waste and management practices, published by the Department of the Environment in December last year, however, shows government specialists here take the risk of contamination more seriously than imagined. According to the report by the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee, depleted uranium shells tested at the range at ESKMEALS, on the Cumbrian coast, are fired into a spe-

cial tunnel fitted with a filtered extract system and pressure-washed with water to avoid contamination.

"The washings are transferred to collecting tanks for eventual disposal in cemented drums to Drigg," the report says. If the DU shell is fixed into armour plate, then the plate itself is sent to Drigg for disposal. So concerned are the British authorities about health hazards from DU shells that an on-site health physics laboratory exists to monitor the workforce on the ESKMEALS firing range. The Department of the Environment report says firings involving uranium have been going on at the range since 1981, and "just over 90 per cent of the total

weight of the shells has been recovered". On 1991 Gulf War battlefields, not a single attempt was made to recover contaminated residues.

The ESKMEALS range possesses seven high-volume air samplers and 1,000 samples are taken annually. A special sampler operates to check what the document calls "the critical group within the public (sic) ... identified as those living in Monk Moors". Depleted uranium shells are also test-fired at Kirkcudbright in Scotland where 1.5 tonnes of the projectiles are targeted every year into the Solway Firth. The shells, the report says alarmingly, "remain on the sea bed where they will corrode with

time to form an insoluble sludge composed of hydrated uranium oxide ... Unsuccessful attempts were made in 1993 to recover some of these shells in order to assess their corrosion state." A small amount of depleted uranium waste also occurs at the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency's site at Portsmouth in Kent disposed of, like the contamination at ESKMEALS, to Drigg in Cumbria.

According to another American Gulf veterans' association, Swords to Plowshares, when a depleted uranium shell strikes armour, up to 70 per cent of the round burns, scattering radioactive and chemically toxic dust in and around the target.

The group quotes a US army report as stating that "aerosol DU exposures to soldiers on the battlefield could be significant with potential radiological and toxicological effects ... short-term effects of high doses can result in death, while long-term effects of low doses have been implicated in cancer". A 1993 US General Accounting Office report stated that American soldiers of the 144th Supply Company of the National Guard were never told of radiation hazards when ordered to recover US military vehicles in the Gulf that were the victim of "friendly fire" attacks using depleted uranium projectiles.

Western evidence is, thus, beginning to bear out the claim by Iraqi doctors that the residues

of Allied DU shells may be a grave health hazard on the Gulf War battlefields. Almost all farm produce consumed by residents of Basra is grown in lands in which thousands of depleted uranium shells were fired. When *The Independent* visited the area in February, local farmers complained of high levels of cancer in their families.

The effectiveness of armour-piercing ammunition principally depends on its density of the material from which it is manufactured, and the British government report says depleted uranium shows "significant performance advantages over other metals". Which is not much comfort to Iraqi cancer sufferers, or Gulf War veterans.

PARIS (Reuters) — French President Jacques Chirac's office took the unusual step yesterday of denying a report that it had set up a "crisis unit" to try to block corruption probes into his Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RPR) party.

"The presidency categorically denies all the allegations concerning it which were published today as the main headline in the newspaper *Le Monde*," an Elysée Palace statement said.

"No such crisis unit exists at the presidency which regrets that the newspaper *Le Monde* did not deem it necessary to verify its story before publication," said the statement which was issued within an hour of the daily hitting the news stands.

Le Monde wrote that the purported unit included Dominique de Villepin, the powerful Elysée secretary-general, and other senior figures including a magistrate assigned as Chirac's legal adviser.

A series of potentially explosive judicial probes is currently under way into practices at Paris city hall during Chirac's tenure as mayor of the capital between 1977 and his election as president in 1995.

Legal sources say magistrates are probing allegations that the municipality then had on its payroll between 150 and 300 people, many of them RPR operatives with no municipal role.

The former Gaullist prime minister, Alain Juppé, was Chirac's deputy mayor in charge of the capital's finances from 1983 to 1995 while simultaneously serving as RPR secretary-general for much of that period.

Le Monde said Chirac's advisers feared Mr Juppé would soon be put under official investigation in the probe. The paper quoted an RPR politician as saying Chirac's crisis unit was specifically aimed at protecting Mr Juppé.

The former premier later released a statement condemning the article. "It is evidence of political and media pressure aimed at influencing and disturbing justice," Mr Juppé said.

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By Deborah Horan
in Jerusalem

SEVEN tin shacks, one partially demolished, stood on a sandy plot of land inside Jerusalem's Old City yesterday, while two dozen members of an extremist Jewish organisation waited to hear whether the authorities would allow them to stay.

Jerusalem's mayor, Ehud Olmert, had given the Ateret Cohanim, a secretive organisation dedicated to buying Arab property in the Old City and east Jerusalem, 24 hours to tear down the shacks. They were put up illegally on Monday night to protest against the murders of two Cohanim members, allegedly by Arab nationalists.

"We wanted to give a Zionist response," said group spokeswoman Klila Harnoy. "We decided the only way left to show how we are fighting for Jerusalem and its unity is to build and that's why we went to this area."

By mid-afternoon, Hanan

Porat of the National Religious Party, a pro-settlement party that is part of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government coalition, had spoken with Mr Olmert to negotiate a compromise that would allow some of the Cohanim members to stay at the site.

Talk of a compromise smacked of a similar settlement made between the government and the Cohanim when its members took over a house in the Palestinian neighbourhood of Ras el-Amud last year. After days of confrontation with Palestinians and left-wing Israelis, a deal was reached that allowed 10 students from the organisation to stay at the site.

Palestinians fear a similar compromise will be reached this time, provoking more violence. On Tuesday, a demonstration against the shacks flared into violence when about 20 members of the Palestinian legislative council rushed from Ramallah to Jerusalem to protest against what they called

a "new settlement" on the plot. By Wednesday, the violence had subsided, but Palestinians vowed to keep up the protests.

The row in the Old City erupted as Newt Gingrich, the American Speaker, was concluding a four-day tour of Israel during which he riled President Clinton's Administration by challenging US policy on the Middle East. On Tuesday, he told Israel's Knesset that Jerusalem should remain united under exclusive Israeli sovereignty.

Mr Gingrich tried to downplay differences with the White House, but his trip here has signalled anything but a unified American voice.

While Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, has been pressuring Israel to withdraw from 13 per cent of the West Bank, Mr Gingrich, echoing most of the US Congress, has repeatedly said that when it comes to "security", Israel must be allowed to make decisions free of pressure.



A Jewish woman carrying a baby through the tin shack settlement erected by the Ateret Cohanim organisation in Jerusalem's Old City Photograph: AFP

FO acts to rescue UK deals in Indonesia

By Richard Lloyd Parry
in Jakarta

THE FOREIGN Office minister, Derek Fatchett, flew into Jakarta last night amid growing tension over the cancellation of a lucrative business contract involving Thames Water and the family of former president, Suharto.

Mr Fatchett will today become the first foreign government minister to meet with the country's new president, BJ Habibie, who took over the leadership after the sudden resignation of President Suharto a week ago. But his visit, as the personal emissary of Tony Blair, risks being overshadowed by the row over Thames Water, which recently lost its contract to supply water to half of Jakarta in a joint venture with Sigit Hardjojudanto, eldest son of the disgraced dictator.

Last Saturday, the Jakarta city authorities suspended the deal - said to be worth £225m - claiming that it was awarded because of nepotism after the cancellation of a competitive tender. Today Mr Fatchett will raise the matter with the Indonesian government, amid fears that dozens of other British projects involving the Suharto clan will be jeopardised by the current backlash against the corruption of the former first family.

The nationwide wave of revolt against Mr Suharto, which led to demonstrations, deadly riots and finally forced his resignation, has transformed itself into a growing determination to dismantle the extensive business networks which his family built up during his 32-two year reign.

The new energy minister is carrying out an investigation into the Suhartos' domination of Indonesia's huge oil and gas industry. A similar examination

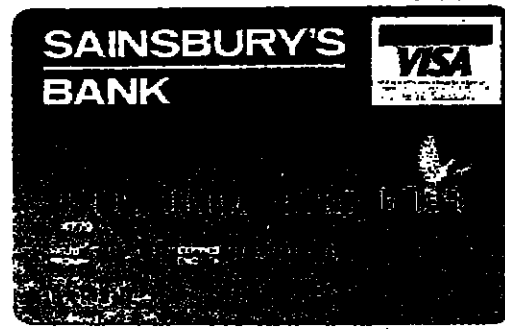
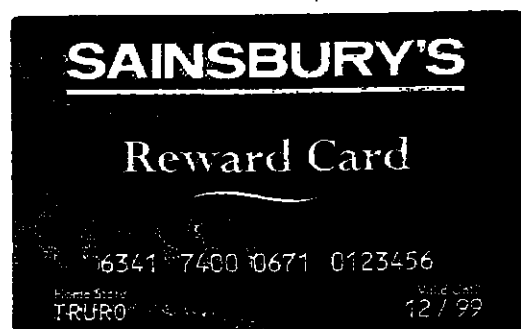
is being made of the family's links with Indonesian co-operatives. The investment minister in Mr Habibie's so-called "reform cabinet" has announced a review of tax breaks granted to relatives and cronies of the former president.

"It will take some time to eliminate corruption and collusion," said HS Dillon, an adviser to the government, yesterday after a meeting with the investment minister, Hamzah Haz. "But whatever can be demonstrated to the public will serve to boost up morale. I would like to see more [contracts cancelled]."

The problem for foreign businessmen in Jakarta is that, for the last three decades, business partnership with a Suharto has been one of the most effective means of making a profit in Indonesia. Last year, after tailing behind Japan, Britain became the biggest foreign investor with commitments of \$5.5bn (£3.4bn) in 31 separate projects. Hundreds of companies, from BP to the Body Shop, have a presence in Indonesia, and many of those have had a leg up from one of Suharto's children or his network of favoured business cronies.

"Last week, these companies were going about things the right way," said one indignant British businessman yesterday. "This week everything's changed, and Thames is just the tip of the iceberg. God help all the others who are caught in the middle. How were they to know?"

"On the one hand, you applaud the Indonesian people because they want a more democratic system," said another businessman. "But the timing is terrible, because they've got to restore investor confidence."



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German nuclear scandal

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A strange French creature anticipating the eve-of-World-Cup ceremonies in Paris when it will help escort giant football players to the Concorde obelisk. Photograph: Michel Lipchitz

Danes threaten 'No' vote on entry into EU

As Denmark goes to the polls today many fear that integration will end their way of life. By Katherine Butler in Copenhagen

"A MELTING pot," says Karen, a young woman who looks like the Danish supermodel Helena Christensen. Ringing up purchases in one of the stores on Ostergade, Copenhagen's smartest shopping street she wrinkles her nose in disapproval. "That's what Europe is turning into. I don't want us to be part of that. It might be selfish but it's the Danish way."

The Danish way is threatening to plunge the rest of Europe into crisis again, as voters go to the polls today to decide if they can stomach further integration with Europe, and the exposure to foreign ways they fear will come in its wake.

Denmark's five million citizens live in a highly regulated state where it is common to pay 60 per cent income tax and parents must name their children from an approved list. Yet most Danes share Soren Jensen's view of the lavish welfare system their taxes sustain. "This is a paradise," says the 40-year-old electrician who enjoys six weeks' paid holiday.

But the social model Danes

are so proud of has exposed its uglier side in the run-up to today's vote on the Amsterdam treaty. Denmark's famed altruism towards foreign immigrants has been exposed as a sham as many admit openly they only want to share their utopia with other Danes.

"Welcome to 40 million Poles," was one of the "No" campaign's posters. It had to be withdrawn after protests, though not before it made an impact on voters.

The xenophobic anti-immigration platform of the far right Danish Peoples' Party, led by a housewife, Pia Kjaersgaard, has driven the campaign by raising fears that the open-borders provisions written into the Treaty will lead to a flood of refugees.

The phobia is generated by tiny numbers. Only four per cent of the population is non-Dane, and half the outsiders are Nordic engineers, Irish bar-

tenders or others of EU stock. A black face in Copenhagen is a rare sight. Most Danes have no contact with immigrants.

But it is precisely the homogeneity of Danish society and the belief that their system is threat which is feeding unparalleled angst about the nation's borders.

Left-wing opponents of the Amsterdam treaty have distanced themselves from this xenophobia, but left and right have found common ground on the threat Europe poses to the 500-year-old democracy Danes claim is being smothered as the EU nudges towards political union.

"Here you can knock on any door and get access to the decision makers. You can ring the Prime Minister at home," says Lars Kaaber, of the catch-all anti-treaty June Movement. "If you've been to Brussels you know how thick the doors there are. Our anxiety is about the way

we perceive ourselves and our democracy."

If they approve the treaty - forecasts yesterday suggested the "Yes" lead had narrowed to six per cent - the campaign has highlighted the cultural rift which will keep the EU dilemma raging in Denmark.

When a Danish woman was arrested in New York for leaving her baby outside a restaurant while she ate lunch, Americans applauded the police. But in Danish society babies, like everyone else, are safe, cushioned by order, regulation and the twin national philosophies of 'jante' which bans anyone from even thinking they are superior to anyone else, and 'hygge' a concept meaning neighbourly.

"Even the bikers have observed a truce for a year," says one diplomat referring to the motorcycle gang wars which have intermittently led to violent killings.

Observers believe Danish euro-scepticism is now more virulent than its British cousin. Feeling they have been tricked into a political project which was sold to them as an economic venture, ordinary people are obsessed with the details of the treaty, as if they were a matter of urgent personal concern.

One woman working in a newsagent said she was worried whether Denmark's opt-outs from the Maastricht Treaty were properly protected in the updated version.

Jorgen Schoubye, 33, a taxi driver said he was voting "Yes" but only after subjecting the document to intense scrutiny. "I called up the information office at the parliament for a copy of the treaty. They sent me a whole package which I have been reading, although it is very legalistic".

Jan Debel runs his own transport business and will be voting "No". "I'm not saying we should leave the EU but we must pull the brake, we must force them to say where they are leading us", he says.

German nuclear scandal

BONN (Reuters) - The German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, at times scarlet with anger, yesterday vigorously defended his environment minister in an unfolding scandal on contaminated shipments of nuclear waste, to reprocessing plants in France and Britain.

"She is not a 'handmaiden' of the industry. She has fulfilled her duties in an outstanding way," he told parliament.

Opposition politicians, who aim to end Germany's reliance on nuclear power, accused Angela Merkel of having been blind to problems with contaminated waste shipments over the past decade because of her commitment to atomic energy.

Both the Social Democrat and ecologist Greens parliamentary groups introduced motions calling for Ms Merkel's resignation, but, with Mr Kohl's coalition controlling a majority in the lower house of parliament, they were rejected.

Mr Kohl said that nuclear power plant operators had made errors, and the government would draw the necessary conclusions.

IN BRIEF

Nazi-era 'traitors' pardoned

BONN (AP) - Germany's major parties have agreed to grant a blanket pardon to hundreds of thousands of Germans deemed wrongfully convicted of treason and other crimes by the Nazis. A law, which was expected to pass the lower house yesterday, rehabilitates people, such as resistance fighters and Jews, who were jailed or ordered executed by Nazi courts for political or racist reasons. It also clears the names of some 350,000 men and women forcibly sterilised under the Nazis.

A political compromise over how to treat soldiers who deserted Hitler's army paved the way for the legislation, more than 50 years after the Nazi era ended. Conservatives in Chancellor Helmut Kohl's ruling coalition refused explicit exoneration for about 20,000 deserters who were sentenced to death by Nazi courts. Instead, the bill lifts Nazi convictions imposed for "military reasons".

Queen's killers to die

KIGALI (Reuters) - A Rwandan military court has sentenced two people to death and one to life imprisonment for the murder of the country's last Tutsi queen during the 1994 genocide. The verdicts were handed down on Tuesday in Butare, south of Kigali, after two former Rwandan army soldiers and a university professor pleaded guilty to killing the queen and six of her relatives four years earlier. Queen Rosalia Gicanda had survived decades of ethnic strife.

Albania peace meeting off

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AP) - Ethnic Albanian negotiators in Kosovo on Wednesday postponed a coming meeting with a Serb government delegation, as both sides reported new incidents in the volatile province.

The Albanians said they could not attend talks scheduled for today in Pristina, because some of their top negotiators would be in the United States with the Kosovo Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova.

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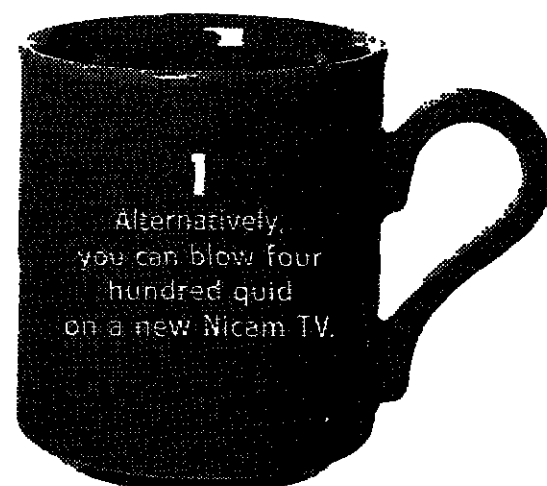


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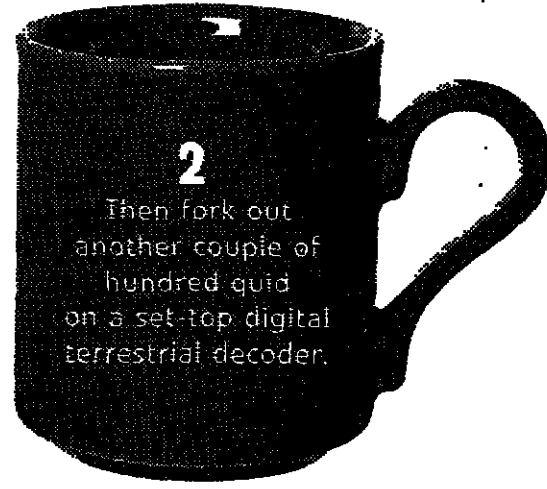


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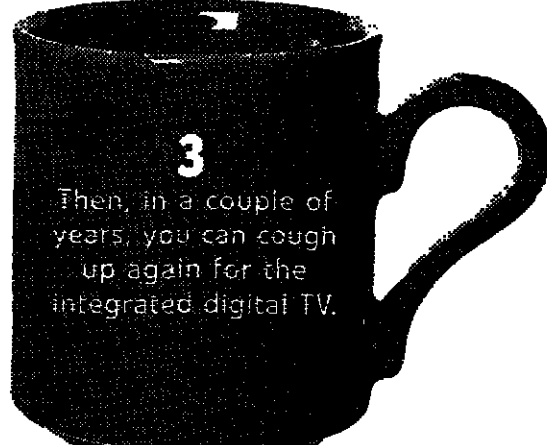
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Ortega faces sex abuse case from his stepdaughter

By Phil Davison
Latin America Correspondent

WHILE Nicaragua's former president, Daniel Ortega, was in New York for UN General Assembly sessions in the Eighties, he regularly forced sex on his teenage stepdaughter in hotel closets, she alleged yesterday.

The stepdaughter, Zoilamerica Narvaez, now 30, made this and a 48-page list of other sexual abuse allegations against Mr Ortega, who is still the leader of the Sandinista Party, at a Managua news conference before filing civil and criminal charges against him in a Managua court.

In her affidavit, she said her stepfather pulled her into hotel room clothes cupboards to rape her because he feared the CIA, during the Ronald Reagan era when revolutionary Nicaragua was seen as a thorn in the America's flesh, had planted spy cameras in his hotel rooms. Claiming that having sex with him was her "revolutionary duty, to give him spiritual tranquility so that he could better fulfil the high obligations thrust upon him by history," the former president often invited a third person to join in, she said.

Even after she was married in 1990, Mr Ortega, now 52 and a father of eight children, would call her for phone sex. Sometimes he insisted on listening on the telephone while she made love with her husband. It was still her "revolutionary duty." He continued making sexual propositions to her until early this year, she said.

In the affidavit, Ms Narvaez, daughter of Mr Ortega's long-time wife, Rosario Murillo, detailed a dozen years of sexual abuse she said began when she was 11, a year before the San-

dinista revolution toppled the Nicaraguan dictator Somoza in 1979.

Mr Ortega, who was re-elected leader of the opposition Sandinistas last weekend, made no immediate comment. However, he has not denied the charges since they were first made, more vaguely, by Mrs Narvaez to the local media in March. At that time she did not intend to press charges but changed her mind after a series of attacks by Sandinista officials calling her "mentally deranged".



Mr Ortega's wife, a leading Nicaraguan poet, has denounced her daughter's accusations as "totally false". A Sandinista party spokesman, Silvio Mora, yesterday described Mrs Narvaez, who is herself a Sandinista activist, as "capricious and traumatised" and said Mr Ortega may sue her for libel.

The court will decide if there is enough evidence to prosecute Mr Ortega, widely known, even to his opponents, only as Daniel. At present he enjoys immunity from prosecution as a party leader in the National Assembly. The Assembly would have to strip him of immunity for the case to go forward, unlikely at present though possi-

ble if the court gives credence to the allegations.

Mrs Narvaez's biological father - Rosario Murillo's first husband - died when she was a child. She was raised by her mother and by Mr Ortega. But while the couple travelled the world on state visits, taking the girl along, the Sandinista leader took advantage of his stepdaughter, according to the affidavit.

Rumours had been rife in Nicaragua for years that Mr Ortega had had sexual relations with Mrs Narvaez, now a mother of two small children. But her charges angered many Sandinistas, to whom Mr Ortega is still the revolutionary hero. Some felt the allegations were part of a political conspiracy against him at a time when the Sandinistas are at a low ebb, having been out of power for eight years.

Mr Ortega lost the last two presidential elections to the right-wing Violeta Chamorro in 1990 and then to current President Arnoldo Aleman in 1996. Despite his recent re-election as the head of the Sandinistas, few believe he would have run for president again in the year 2002, even without the sexual abuse allegations.

In the affidavit, Mrs Narvaez said the sexual abuse began when she was 11 and living with Ortega and her mother in guerrilla camps in neighbouring Costa Rica during the final stages of the Sandinista war against Somoza. What began as fondling escalated to rape in 1982 when Mr Ortega was president, she claimed. "He threw me down on the rug, where he not only pawed me but, with aggressive and brusque movements, damaged me. The whole act was forced. It was without my pleasure or consent. This I swear."



Zoilamerica Narvaez telling a Managua press conference of the sex abuse she allegedly received from her stepfather, Daniel Ortega (left) Photograph: AP

Financial turmoil grips Russia

By Phil Reeves
in Moscow

RUSSIA tripled interest rates to a staggering 150 per cent yesterday in an attempt to defend the rouble and find an antidote to the wasting disease afflicting its financial markets.

Boris Yeltsin personally joined the battle, by calling an emergency meeting for today with the head of the Central Bank, his new prime minister, and finance minister as a fresh flurry of panic over Russia's economy sent shares tumbling still further.

Rocked by the continuing fall-out from the Asian crisis, depressed oil prices, labour protests and a plethora of other domestic problems - new and old - Russia's woes are proving to be a baptism of fire for

the prime minister, Sergei Kiriyenko, a former provincial banker appointed a month ago to cries of alarm from opposition parties.

His problems were compounded this week by the government's failure to sell at auction the state oil company Rosneft, long hailed as the show piece of the privatisation programme, the model sell-off. Mr Kiriyenko had hoped to raise more than \$2bn (£1.25bn) for the gaping state coffers by selling a 75 per cent stake. He decided to press ahead in spite of complaints from potential buyers that the starting price was too high, given world oil prices.

It was a resounding flop. The leading expected contenders, which include consortia containing BP and Royal

Dutch/Shell, stayed away. No one bid, forcing the Kremlin back to the drawing board. A new auction date will be set on Monday, but the government has cut the opening price to \$1.7bn.

Mr Yeltsin countered by signing an "austerity plan", cooked up by Mr Kiriyenko, to slash government spending by \$10bn - 12 per cent of the 1998 budget. Although a proportion of the cuts were a foregone conclusion, as the government never had a hope of raising the tax revenue to fund them, some will be real.

The country is already echoing with the clamour of victims of market transition - from angry miners (fresh from 10 days of blockading the railway system) unpaid pensioners and forgotten scientists, to a crum-

bling army, and workers in a tottering education and health system. However, the president's move was welcomed by the International Monetary Fund, which has dispatched a senior official to Moscow today. The fund is still mulling over the release of the next \$670m tranche of a \$9.2bn loan agreed in 1996.

Matters were not helped by rumours in Moscow that, after pumping reserves into propping it up, the government will devalue the hitherto stable rouble - sacrificing one of the Yeltsin administration's triumphs in the difficult transition to a market economy.

Mr Kiriyenko yesterday reiterated his determination to defend the currency, as interest rates rose to their highest level since February 1996. It re-


mains to be seen if this will soothe the nerves of the small stock market, which - after a stellar performance - has recently slumped by 50 per cent.

A central part of Russia's problem is that the government is caught in a snare. It is under intense political pressure to pay wages and pensions, despite low tax revenues, meagre foreign investment, and a post-Soviet record-low income for oil. If the situation worsens, there will be a political price to pay - notably in the presidential elections in 2000. Nationalism, anti-westernism and a general distaste for reform is already simmering away. To find funds, it has to borrow, but it can only lure investors by offering hefty returns, diverting their money from vital investment in the infrastructure.



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Catholic martyr still a thorn in Pakistan's side

A bishop's suicide has pushed Christians on the sub-Continent to campaign against blasphemy laws. Peter Popham reports

THREE weeks after the event, the shock waves caused by the suicide of Pakistan's most prominent and outspoken Catholic bishop, Dr John Joseph, are still reverberating.

On Sunday a large crowd of Indian Christians, protesting against the infamous blasphemy law that prompted the bishop's death, tried to break through the border into Pakistan at Wagah, north-west India. The US State Department has voiced its indignation. And in a move that would have pleased the bishop, Pakistan's churches have, since his death, for the first time decided to campaign together against the law.

John Joseph, the tall, lean, 65-year-old cleric who was one of the first native Pakistanis to be consecrated a bishop, shot himself through the temple on the steps of the sessions court in the town of Sahiwal in West Punjab on the evening of Wednesday 6 May. According to Patras Samuel, the bishop's driver who was only yards away at the time, and who was the first person to reach the body - "Blood was spurting everywhere... I was crying" - the bishop died almost at once.

None of John Joseph's close colleagues are in any doubt as to why he died: to bring pressure to bear on the government to repeal a pernicious law which has already resulted in the deaths through lynching of six people, including a High Court

Muhammad Akram, that his religion was right and Muhammad's was wrong. He then invited the Muslims to go with him to Karachi to peruse the book written by "Sulman Rushadi", whereupon they would realise that their religion was false and the Holy Prophet a liar. "Exasperated", the petition goes on, "the complainant grappled with Ayyub Masih" and the latter was then handed over to the police.

According to Ayyub, the entire case was a fabrication, cooked up between his family's landlord, a relative of a man in the local police department, and the complainant and witnesses, who were given a large financial inducement to testify. The motive: to force Ayyub's and the other Christian families to abandon the village, then seize their land.

And even while Ayyub Masih sat in the local police station, that is what happened. His mother, Anaida Masih, told *The Independent*. "When they came and seized my son, they beat him with sticks and pelted him with stones in the middle of the village, then took him to the police station. At the same time, the mob started attacking our house, firing guns, throwing stones, trying to set it on fire. We had lived peacefully in the village for 40 years, but one hour after Ayyub was stoned we ran away from the village with just what we stood up in." Since then, their house and property have been burned, and the other 15 Christian families have fled as well.

After leaving the village, and after her son had been charged with blasphemy, Anaida Masih took her woes to Dr Joseph. John Joseph was long known as a campaigning bishop. In 1992 his hunger strike helped persuade the government to drop its plan to include religious affiliation on identity cards. He had been leading the fight against the blasphemy law for years. "We have struggled to save every citizen accused of blasphemy," he said in January. He blamed "the extremist element" for killing "a number of Christians before they were even tried", and went on: "When I was preaching at the funeral of Manzoor Masih, who was killed during his trial outside the High Court in Lahore, I said: 'Manzoor, we are very sorry for what has happened to you. We shall not allow any more of these murders.'"

One month ago, on 27 April, the death sentence was pronounced on Ayyub Masih. "I came to Faisalabad to give the bishop the news," his mother recalled, "and he was very upset. I said, 'God will help us,' but he was very worried. Then he said to me, 'Before Ayyub dies, I will die. With my sacrifice, perhaps something will happen.'"

And he was not just saying this to Ayyub Masih's mother: John Joseph was telling the world at large. In a document he sent to Rome, read out there the day before his death, he said: "I shall count myself fortunate if in this mission of breaking barriers, our Lord receives the sacrifice of my blood for the benefit of his people."

His fellow Catholics in Pakistan heard his words but did not realise how deeply he meant them. Today they are still trying to come to terms with the implications. Ayyub Masih's death sentence has not been overturned, but his mother says: "I am not upset about Ayyub - I have many sons. I am upset because we will not get our bishop back."



Policemen chasing mourners who were demonstrating outside the house of the late Bishop John Joseph, in Faisalabad earlier this month

Photograph: KM Chaudhry/AP



Joseph: Wanted his suicide to publicise blasphemy law

judge. The law in question is section 295(C) of the Pakistan Penal Code, promulgated by the dictator Zia ul-Haq in 1986. It is a simple enough statute: "Whoever... directly or indirectly defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad... shall be punished with death, or imprisonment for life".

The defilement can be merely spoken; all that is required for a conviction is one complainant, and one witness. Although life imprisonment is an option, judges have so far preferred to pass death sentences. None of these has yet been carried out, and some have been overturned by higher courts, but since 1990 Muslim fanatics have taken it upon themselves to murder five people either accused or convicted under the statute, and one High Court judge who overturned a lower court's blasphemy conviction.

The story that culminated in Bishop Joseph's death began in October 1996. Ayyub Masih, a 25-year-old Christian, lived with his Christian family in an overwhelmingly Muslim village in the country outside the town of Sahiwal. He was the first person in his family to become literate, passing his Matriculation Exam in 1996. By trade he was a mason.

The allegation has a farcical quality. On 14 October, according to the prosecution, Ayyub was sitting in the street outside his house when three Muslims happened by. Ayyub, it is alleged, told one of them,

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An intellectual in Paris

The English revile philosophers, the French fête them. But is France's capital still the place to go to contemplate life, the universe and everything? By Michael Glover

SOME OF the words we use to describe the idea of an intellectual in England are downright nasty: boffin, wonk, egghead. These are all mocking, purgative and onomatopoeically hard, slugging terms. In Paris, just a smooth Euroride away these days, they do things slightly differently. There, the idea of the intellectual has a prestige and an emotional gravity that are quite foreign to the pragmatic, phlegmatic and anti-theatrical English temperament. But is this still the case – even after the death of Communism?

I have been in Paris to do a little Euro-sleuthing. First stop was the news-stand at the Gare du Lyon. Lots of serious literary



fiction, published by Gallimard, dominated the displays. Regis Debray's autobiography, *Pour L'Amour de L'Art – Une Education Intellectuelle*, a long-winded exercise in quasi-philosophical self-questioning, was being pushed heavily. As was a book-length interview with the humourist Pierre Desproges, whose shoutline on the front cover read like a pure Cartesian re-hash: "La Seule Certitude Que J'ai c'est d'être Dans Le Doute" (The only certainty is that I am in doubt). Would any English publisher have considered that a strong sales pitch?

I bought issues of *Le Monde*, Paris' most information-stuffed daily. *Le Monde* is visually severe, relentlessly serious-minded and self-assuredly present – so confident in its prescience, in fact, that the following day's edition is always available by the afternoon of the day before.

Recently, the papers included a prominent article about 35 cineastes who joined a demonstration to show solidarity with those without legitimate rights of residence. Would anyone in England give two hoots for what a bunch of film-makers thought? Other articles reported on how bitterly French intellectuals were divided over the Algerian question, and attacked the Al-

banian novelist, Ismail Kadare, for being misguided about Kosovo. "A great literary talent has lost his political passion," snapped the columnist.

That loss of temper is pure Jean-Paul Sartre, who once said that for a writer, political engagement was a fundamental moral necessity. In fact, to be politically quiet was an act of treachery. How more un-English can you get than that?

Why do cineastes man the barricades in this way? I asked the poet, Marc Delouze, over a solidarity-inducing bottle of Côte de Bourg in Montmartre. "To practice the art of film," he replied, "requires both money and collective organisation. It cannot function without either. Poets and novelists can happily practice their art as solitary individuals, whereas the cineastes cannot..."

Then I ask him how Sartre is regarded these days. Not well, he says, because he got washed up on the wilder shores of Maoism in his old age. Albert Camus, who didn't believe in the idea of the politically engaged writer, has fared better.

And what do people in general think about the idea of the intellectual? Mistrust, he says. It's a bourgeois, Parisian phenomenon. The idea of the purity of ideas is perhaps a nonsense. So many of them had their faces in the soup... Which means? "They were seduced by the idea of power. Now ideology is dead. We have nothing left but capitalism and the market."

Last year, French intellectuals were under attack in the book *Impostures Intellectuelles* by two physicists, Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont, who were particularly unhappy at the wholesale appropriation of scientific terms. "They spout scientific theories of which they have, at best, a slender grasp. They display superficial erudition by tossing words at the reader... They show a profound indifference, if not contempt, for facts and logic." The psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, philosopher Regis Debray and semiotician Julia Kristeva came out of the book particularly badly.

I ask Delouze about Philippe Sollers, novelist, biographer, penseur, sometime husband to Kristeva, and one of the "Grands Intellectuels" of the present moment, a man who frequently pontificates on cultural matters on French television.

"Très, très, très, brillant," says Delouze, triumphantly emphatic, "but a little slippery, too. A man who once dined with Giscard d'Estaing and more recently identified himself with the Balladur camp.



Sartre and friend discuss serious matters in Café Flore (above). Voltaire entertains fellow philosophers (above left) Photograph: Papillon/Sygma. Engraving: MEPL

I, for my part, refused an invitation to the Elysée after the Gulf War. He pauses for another glass or two and sighs heavily. Aragon, that great, unreconstructed Communist intellectual, once described Delouze as the "Rimbaud De Nos Jours".

Later, I go on the trail of the places that Sartre and other intellectual celebrities haunted. First off, Sartre's last port of call: Montparnasse cemetery. Sartre got a terrific send-off when he died in 1980 – 50,000 people thronged the Boulevard Montparnasse. There they lie together now, he and Simone de Beauvoir, much more consistently so than in life, in an unadorned grave, without religious iconography, a fittingly simple resting place for two virulent atheists. Fresh bunches of tulips have been flung across the tombstone. Not entirely unloved and forgotten, then.

Ten minutes away is La Closerie des

Lilas, a restaurant once used by the likes of Picasso, Léger, Matisse, Gertrude Stein, F Scott Fitzgerald... as I sit down amid its plush splendour, I wonder how they all afforded it. Just then I spot him, a few feet away, writing with a slender tortoiseshell pen in an expensive black leather notebook.

My steak tartare arrives, together with the bottle of house red. The wine is terrible. I tell the waiter what I think without mincing a single word of my polished French: "C'est affreux." The waiter, stung, tells me it's as good as it ought to be for the price I'd agreed to pay.

Then the writer, who has been observing this theatrical performance, chips in. You should have chosen St Emilion, he says, pointing to the bottle in front of him. I give him a thin, plastic smile and chew stolidly on. The steak tartare tastes like warm grit. Maybe that's my mood. Moments later, a bottle of St Emilion arrives at the table,

courtesy of Monsieur. The waiter matters, staring into the middle distance.

Then we get prattling, this Monsieur and I, two Parisian intellectual songbirds, about the ancient kingdom of Aquitaine, which had united the thrones of England and France. About the fact that he himself was from Bordeaux. About art – and how, in his opinion, art without Catholicism was almost an impossibility. Well, almost.

When he leaves, there is a general stirring in the restaurant. A man leans towards me. "Did you know that was Philippe Sollers?" he says.

I return to the apartment, a little light-headed, and pluck one of Sollers' most recent books from the bookshelf. It is a biography of that 18th-century adventurer, Vivant Danon, painter, engraver, soldier, and the amateur Egyptologist whose rich plunder adorns the Louvre.

But what interests me more is Sollers'

manner of writing. Not dry-as-dust like so much Anglo-Saxon biography, but conversational, intimate, witty, as if addressed to some small, highly selective salon of one's fellow intellectuals. He writes almost as though he is a contemporary, and has the broad intellectual compass of a Rousseau, a Voltaire, those great spirits whose ideas helped to shape the making of the French Republic 200 years ago.

That was an age when the writer/philosopher really had clout; when it was still just possible to believe that the sum total of human knowledge was attainable, and that human beings were perhaps even perfectible if you thought hard and long enough...

But especially so when helped along by a bottle or two of half-decent St Emilion. Some hours – or is it days? – later, I wonk back to London. I am greeted by a fine, mean, intellectually disparaging drizzle.

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Champagne Sylvie

Even the orchestra, who couldn't see her, gave Sylvie Guillem a standing ovation when she recently appeared with her old ballet company in Paris. By John Percival

"OH GOD, it's Guillem," according to the ballerina herself, is what some people at the Paris Opera say when they see her approaching the theatre she left nine years ago for an international career.

But that has not stopped them from inviting her back for performances between now and early July in Nureyev's *Don Quixote* and *Romeo and Juliet* and MacMillan's *Manon*.

At her first night, on Tuesday, the company was at its most glittering and the packed audience greeted every dance with especially warm applause. At the end, among cries of "Brava Sylvie", even the orchestra, though they hadn't been able to see her perform, stood to applaud.

Kiri in *Don Quixote* is one of Sylvie Guillem's best and favourite parts. Nureyev, who taught her the role, described her in it as "like champagne", which perfectly describes her interpretation, so amazingly light, elegant, bubbling, heady and intoxicating.

She enjoyed a tremendous success in it with the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden but looks even better in Paris for three reasons.

First, the production is so much better. Nureyev provided more and richer dances, and made the story fuller, clearer and more detailed, too. Nicholas Georgiadis's resplendent designs, inspired by Goya, give the characters a convincing habitat, and David Coleman conducts the Opera's orchestra in a loving, lively account of the Léon Minkus score, arranged by John Lanchbery.

Second, Guillem is surrounded by an ensemble who studied at the same school as she did. Their style echoes hers. They make the big classical dream scene delicately



Sylvie Guillem (left) was taught the role of Kiri in 'Don Quixote' by Rudolf Nureyev, who described her in it as 'like champagne' Photograph: Laurie Lewis

harmonious, they swoop, stamp and swirl their cloaks with fierce temperament as market people, gypsies, fishermen and matadors; and the bravura solos in the Dryads and wedding scenes are done with élan.

Above all, they can give her partners of her own standing, in technique and personality. This time it was Nicholas Le

Riche, who was new to the Corps de Ballet when Guillem left the Opera but is now their most brilliant young star.

And for the honour and challenge of dancing with her, he used every fraction of his power in his solos, every bit of strength in partnering (including when she decided to raise one leg even higher while held

up above his head), and every bit of casual charm in his acting.

One problem: to get into one of Guillem's performances, you would need either immense luck or to rob somebody who already has tickets. But there is one consolation: many other cast members are dancing and with this company you get a good show whoever and whatever is on.

كلنا من الأصل

If you want them to say sorry don't ask their government



RUPERT
CORNWELL

ONCE MORE THE apology season is upon us. An American President who apologised for medical experiments upon unknown blacks has now apologised - well, almost apologised - for slavery. A British Prime Minister has apologised for the 19th-century Potato Famine in Ireland.

Some Australians (with the notable exception of their government) have just apologised to the Aborigines. And the Japanese have almost, but not quite, apologised for their horrific treatment of captured British war prisoners in the camps of South-East Asia.

But what can these formal acts of contrition achieve? And, beyond an inner-glow of self-righteousness and short-term political expediency, the answer, one must reluctantly conclude, is: nothing.

The apology, official and unofficial, is part of our confessional age. Admit the sin and it will be expunged from your record; the past will be set to rights and sweet reason will prevail. Confess to guilt over the Potato Famine today, and over Bloody Sunday tomorrow, and the way will be eased towards a settlement in Ireland.

Would that it were so simple, that unpleasant events could be wished away, airbrushed from the collective memory like Trotsky or Bukharin from a Soviet photograph of Lenin. Alas, apologies by governments, however well-intentioned, cannot do that, for the past is part of our present.

The divisions of Ireland and the brutalities visited upon British POWs on the other side of the world offer a common lesson: if apology and forgiveness are to mean anything, they must be at the level of the individual.

How inconvenient that must be for Tony Blair, so irritated by our national obsession with the past. Indeed, he must have reflected on the irony of the monarch of his future-oriented kingdom bestowing the Order of the Garter upon her guest, thus using mediaeval mumbo-jumbo to pour petrol on the flames of a controversy our Prime Minister devoutly wishes would disappear in the higher interests of trade, mutual affection and prosperity for all.

But just as only the capacity of the individual inhabitants of Northern Ireland to forgive the outrages visited upon their families and communities by their foes can turn the Good Friday settlement into a permanent peace, so it must be for the veterans and their captors to find their own accommodation.

Anything less would be akin to the eye-lowered handshake of apology wrung from a boy found guilty of schoolyard bullying - a grudging truce that makes it no less likely he will pick the very same fight the next week.

And, you might ask, if Japan must seek a pardon, should we escape censure? This politics by gesture could continue ad infinitum.

teetering between political correctness and downright absurdity.

If the Potato Famine, slavery and the treatment of British prisoners in South-East Asia, then why not public contrition to Wales for being forced into the Union, to Scotland for Culloden, indeed, to every country subjected to the attentions of Britannia Imperatrix?

After all, the soldiers were stationed in Asia 55 years ago to protect an empire imposed, unsought and unwanted, upon native populations reduced to second-class citizens in their own land. Have we apologised for that?

Perhaps, official remorse has been expressed. But in the hearts of individual British people - in other words the national subconscious - the Empire remains a source of pride not shame. No formulation of words from our rulers will make the slightest difference.

But it will be asked, what of the Germans? After all, they have apologised, and have we not made our peace with them? Indeed, we have, but not, I would argue, as a result of any formal statements on the part of the German government (and these have been legion), nor because of the huge sums paid by Bonn to compensate victims of the Nazi regime.

No, the decisive element has been the visible sorrow and sense of guilt of individual Germans - a trauma whose collective legacy is a country to this day scared of its own shadow.

When Chancellor Willy Brandt fell to his knees in 1970 before the monument to the victims of the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw, and when President Richard von Weizsäcker delivered his famous speech of national expiation, asking why everyone went about their usual business as "the trains which rolled in the night" carried the innocent to the death-camps, both men were expressing not just their

**The most fitting
atonement for wars is to
ensure they never occur
again - deeds not words**

country's anguish but their own. *Nie wieder* - Never Again - is not a hollow slogan, but the deepest wish of almost every German. If Japan's post-war behaviour is a guide, it is the deepest wish of the Japanese people, too. The proof of repentance lies in deeds, not words.

The most fitting atonement for war and its savageries is to ensure they never occur again. The two most bellicose of this century's powers have become its most pacifist. Regret, sorrow, pain, contrition... it matters not what infinitely calibrated choice of words finally passes the lips of the Emperor or his government.

I would be the last to make light of the unspeakable sufferings of those veterans who turned their backs on the Emperor along the Mall and burned his country's flag. For the former prisoners who can forgive, I have boundless admiration. For those who cannot, I have equally boundless understanding.

How would I react in similar circumstances? Having never been put to such a trial, I simply do not know. What I do know, however, is that the apology and the forgiveness which count are those freely arrived at between individuals, between he who inflicted misery and he who endured it.

Pagans and the craggy home of the playboy of the western world



JOHN
WALSH

I went to the Aran Islands the other day, those three strips of flat limestone and patchwork-quilt fields off the west coast of Ireland. Fans of *Father Ted* will be familiar with the smallest island, Inishkeer, because it doubles as Craggy Island in the aerial credit sequence, but otherwise the Arans remain a mysterious presence on the Atlantic coast - beyond civilisation, beyond the stone wilderness of Connemara, a place off the scale when it comes to elemental wildness.

I'd gone there in the footsteps of John Millington Synge, the Irish playwright, who first set foot on the Arans in May 1898. According to literary myth, he was told to go there by WB Yeats, when the two men met in Paris two years earlier - to go and "express a life that has never found expression".

He landed on Inishmore ("the big island") on 10 May, but found it a boringly ordinary fishing port, albeit with a dramatic medieval stone fort perched on a 300ft cliff. After two weeks, he headed for Inishmaan ("the middle island") and stayed for two months, taking in a brief excursion to Inishbeg ("the small island") at the end.

And from this unpromising terrain of stony field and storm-lashed beach, he invented Anglo-Irish drama.

Is that pitching it too high? Certainly, from listening to the locals' conversation (and that of the servant girls through the floorboards of his room) and rendering it into English while keeping its Celtic rhythm, he found the melancholic, meandering but passionate voice that became the sound of Irish drama this century, from *The Playboy of the Western World* to Martin McDonagh's *Leenane Trilogy*, which is currently knocking 'em dead on Broadway.

What he found was a small community of fishing people and subsistence farmers, who spoke Gaelic and loved news, and for whom pagan gods and spirits and fairies were real, everyday things. It must have been like discovering magical realism walking towards him on a windy beach.

He wrote about their clothes, especially the red petticoats of the women and the waistcoats and calf-skin shoes ("pampooties") of the men, which had to be soaked in water every night to soften their hides. He hung out with the girls on the beach (they admired his enormous camera and his handsome moustache) and played his violin for the



John Millington Synge (left), the
inventor of Anglo-Irish drama
Photograph: Trinity College
Dublin/Penguin Books

oldsters in the pub. The locals asked him about the progress of the Spanish-American war and bragged about their fame abroad.

Because most of the strangers they met were philologists, the islanders concluded that most Europeans were fixated on their tongue. "Believe me," one man assured Synge, "there are few rich men now in the world who are not studying the Gaelic."

And if he were alive now, and went to see the place? On Inishmaan, a horrible pink neon sign announces a nearby B'n'B and there is a ramshackle burger shack on the beach. But the modern world hasn't treated the place too badly.

Paddy Crowe, who plies the local ferry between the islands and the Clare mainland, carries a mobile phone and calls his boat "The Happy Hooker". His wife Sarah makes coffee from a Krups espresso machine in her super-modern kitchen. Their children are bilingual, but speak Irish at break-time in the 32-class school.

There are four ponies and traps, three cars, three pubs and no crime. The grocer's shop sells loose nails, potato flairs, lamp oil and a biography of Sean O'Casey, but your more sophisticated requirements (*prosciutto*, capers, the *Independent*) must be ordered from Galway and sent by ferry.

Inishmaan, where Synge spent the most time, is bleaker, stonier, hillier and more savage than its neighbours, and its population is dwindling.

The last recorded "pampootie" was worn in 1888, and the elderly Aran ladies don't wear red petticoats any more; instead they process grandly past you in full black skirts and shawls crocheted in unpeppered primary colours.

There is just one pub, known to all as "The Pub", where the landlord is Padraig Sean Brian - his second and third Christian names being the names of his grandfather and father, a kind of grid-reference on the map of island relationships and descendencies.

Surnames are pretty irrelevant anyway, since everyone you meet is a Faherty, a Connelly or a McDonagh, just as they were in Synge's time.

I found the cottage where he stayed, four summers running. It is fantastically dilapidated, but they plan to restore it this year, to offer guided tours, serve visitors tea and cakes and allow aspiring writers a room in which to compose.

Otherwise, Inishmaan is winding down. Twenty years ago, there were 250 souls; now there are 171. There are only 16 children in the school. "I don't see much future for the island," said one born-and-bred Inishmaanite. "People will disappear, or else they'll grow up, leave and not come back."

What they dread most is not becoming a ghost island, but of being overrun by Europeans, as Achill has been overrun by Germans.

As you stand on the hillside by the stone "seat" Synge built 100 years ago, and look at the gorgeous view - the serene lines of dry-stone wall, the tiny green

fields above, the smooth playing-fields of rock below, the far Homeric Cliffs of Moher - you think: It's time another *Playboy* appeared, to save this outcrop of the western world from extinction.

The national hostility that hangs like a Bhopal cloud over the Japanese emperor's visit has surprised many people.

Why (they ask) the toxic animosity about the Japanese war record? Why, do we find it so hard to forgive the Japanese the Burma-Siam Railway? More to the point, why is it not just the military veterans who still bear a grudge against the Yellow Peril, but a younger (male) generation in their forties and fifties who never took part in the conflict?

The reason may be found in the anti-Japanese iconography of the comics we read in the late Fifties - where the guards always wore shorts and granny spectacles and waved Samurai swords around and yelled "Aaaaaa! You die, Blitish dog" when crossed by the brave Allied prisoners. But it can be located more pungently in a single book.

It was called *The Knights of Bushido* by Lord Russell of Liverpool. It was a small paperback that every schoolboy of my generation remembers, for it was passed from hand to hand in playground and locker room like a nasty variant of the *Kama Sutra*.

And there was, indeed, something a wee bit perverse about its lovingly detailed, close-up descriptions of Japanese war crimes, complete with grotesque pictures of emaciated bodies being brutalised and tortured.

Like a basic primer of cruelty, it offered to our astonished eyes a glimpse of how inventively sadistic human beings could be with each other, using nothing more elaborate than a water hose, a handful of rice seeds and a length of barbed wire.

Lord Russell, a First World War soldier and lawyer turned military prosecutor, also wrote *The Scourge of the Swastika*, a companion volume about Nazi war crimes - but that wasn't nearly as gory and we didn't bother with it.

Every literate male fortysomething I've spoken to remembers the *Bushido* volume and how soiled they felt after only dipping into it.

I'm certain it embedded a gene of Nippophobia in our hearts, inextricably entwined with our first stirrings of sado-masochism.

Piracy is a threat, but the Internet is the performer's best friend



WENDY
GROSSMAN

BRITISH Music Rights, a campaigning organisation set up by music publishers and composers, are demanding that the Government look into the enforcement of copyright on the Internet, insisting that Britain's third largest invisible export

could be badly damaged without a legal framework.

Now it has become possible to download CD-quality music from Websites, music publishers are following in the footsteps of law enforcement, print publishers, and governments in demanding regulation to mitigate their fear of losing control.

Speaking as a former internationally obscure folk singer, it's pretty galling to see a huge, gaudy industry notorious for ripping off its artists pleading that there will be no incentive to invest in new work if the Internet isn't regulated now.

EMI made £307m in profits last year; compare that to the £40m the industry estimates it is losing to piracy.

While it is true that the many small record labels would be far

more seriously damaged if piracy runs out of control, we all know perfectly well that any money clawed back from regulating Internet downloads won't go to those small companies. It will go to the big players: the ones that has, gets.

The Internet does not need special regulation in order to stop piracy. It is already clearly illegal to sell bootlegged copies of copyrighted works; the precise nature of the distribution mechanism is irrelevant.

Requiring Internet service providers and telecommunications companies to act as copyright police is still more inappropriate. British Music Rights have singled out Web-based fan sites, some of which have offered unreleased concert recordings or studio out-takes.

I'm more sympathetic to this last point, since artists only have the right to control the first recording of their songs (after that, issuing a licence to another artist to cover the song is automatic), and publication on the Web might easily jeopardise that right.

But can there be any sight more graceless than last year's demands from Oasis's management that Web-site owners take down all copyrighted material (photos, videos, song clips, lyrics)? A distinction has to be made between a for-profit bootleg operation and a fan site.

Copyright law is commonly thought of as existing to give creative artists the chance to profit from their work so that they can afford to go on being creative artists. But it has a balancing purpose, too, which is to

give the public fair access to that work.

The fair use doctrine, which permits things like quoting from books and articles for the purpose of review, parody, or comment, does not apply to music. The use of the tiniest portion of a tune may be subject to legal action, even though musicians throughout history traditionally quoted from each other's work much the way book authors do.

If we are going to revise the copyright laws for the digital era, I believe fair use should be applied to music - and film, TV, and video, too.

The music industry has more reason than most to be scared of the Internet. Not only does the Net offer a low-cost distribution mechanism (albeit without the luxurious

cover art), but it makes it easier for independent bands to develop a following and by-pass traditional record companies entirely.

But music publishers could, if they chose, see the Internet as an opportunity to build closer relationships between bands and Britain's 6m Web users. They could learn to use the unique qualities of the Net to sell products that would have been uneconomical before, such as niche artists, scraps of music too short for radio play but suitable for Windows start-up noises, or custom recordings of personalised lyrics.

Unfortunately, British Music Rights has done the equivalent of declaring war on the Net. Not the best marketing strategy for a new millennium, I'd have thought.

and investigative magazine which ran an unflattering profile of the Egyptian.

While the Knightsbridge shop is once again placing ads in Condé Nast publications, the ultimate sign of peace came a few days ago. Condé Nast has won a hotly contested battle with National Magazines to produce Harrods' Christmas catalogue.

Dead end

EVERYONE was anxious to leave for last week's parliamentary recess but a debate on the Common Agricultural Policy detained many of them.

Pandora has great sympathy for Jean Corston, MP for Bristol East, whose adjournment debate came as the last piece of business on the agenda, the so-called "graveyard slot". The title of her debate? "Amos Vale Cemetery".

Peace on earth

ONE OF the bitterest feuds of the Nineties is clearly over. Their out-of-court settlement was announced months ago by Harrods owner, Mohamed Al Fayed, and Condé Nast, publishers of *Vanity Fair*, the celebrity

PANDORA Chill out

ANYBODY who has seen Tim Roth acting in *Reservoir Dogs* or his latest film, *Liar*, has to respect the man's intensity. But if you have the kind of energy Roth has, it's evidently not all that easy to switch it off.

Last night in the Groucho, Roth was having a beer with friends. One celebrity-watcher noticed not only was the Hollywood star chewing gum but he was smoking at the same time.

None of this was mentioned in *Village Voice*, a leading "alternative" NYC newspaper which regularly launches attacks on mainstream newspapers like the *New York Times* and the *Daily News*.

Harold Evans is now, of course, vice-chairman of the *Daily News*.

We like Harry

A RATHER nasty British media story has surfaced in, of all places, *New York's Village Voice*. It concerns Harry Evans and his period as editor of the *Sunday Times* in 1972.

It appears the distinguished former editor and husband of Tina Brown has truly been the victim of a unfair hatchet job.

The media editor of *Village Voice*, James Ledbetter, has accused Evans of helping to "bury" compelling evidence that the British military planned in advance the infamous 1972 Londonderry attack known as "Bloody Sunday".

The truth is that an initial piece by Murray Sayle and Derek Humphry, with assistance from Peter Pringle, was spiked by the *Sunday Times*.

The Listener

ANN DIAMOND is recognised as one of the most dogged interviewers in the British media. This has not changed since she and Nick Owen joined LBC Radio.

In a recent confrontation with Mark Oaten, Chairman of the All Party Group on Far East Prisoners of War, she repeatedly asked the Liberal Democrat MP for Winchester if he didn't have sympathy for those protesting the visit of the Japanese Emperor. Yes, he did feel sorry, Oaten said over and over, to the point that it was becoming habitual.

Later, Oaten told friends that he suspected Diamond had been wrongly briefed that he was not sympathetic to the POW's cause. "I wish Nick had been there," he mused tiredly.

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John Coiley

JOHN COILEY was a man distinguished by great courtesy and an encyclopaedic and scholarly knowledge of railways.

In his 17 years in charge of the National Railway Museum in York, the museum achieved a stature and authority without precedent in the fields of railway history and preservation. But it was his personal qualities that characterised his administration and inspired profound affection and respect among colleagues and friends as well as those of the wider public who came to appreciate and benefit from his achievements.

Coiley was born in 1932 and educated at Beckenham and Penge Grammar School and Selwyn College, Cambridge, where he obtained his BA and later a PhD in metallurgy. His early career was with the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, at Harwell, followed by a period in industry as a development manager. Recruited in 1973 to the Science Museum in London, he presided over the crucial stages in the setting up of the new railway museum in York. He brought with him a life-long interest in and knowledge of railways and arrived in the museum as the York initiative was beginning to take shape.

The National Railway Museum resulted directly from the 1968 Transport Act which established that the British Railways Board should transfer responsibility for its outstanding historic railway collection to the Department of Education and Science, which in that context meant the Science Museum.

After prolonged deliberation on the future location of the collection, the Minister, Jennie Lee, in the debate on the Bill on 5 December 1968, said that, "to have one really first-class

museum at York is in the best interest of the people generally, and it is in keeping with government policy that we should have some high points of excellence outside London as well as inside".

That decision set the scene for the first major national collection to be housed outside London, as an outstation of the Science Museum, and set a precedent that other museums continue to follow.

In 1974 Coiley was appointed Keeper of the new museum and led the immense task of transferring to York the collections, then largely housed in the Museum of British Transport in Clapham, south London, and installing the displays in the converted building. He saw the museum through its successful opening by the Duke of Edinburgh on 27 September 1975, the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway.

The museum was an instant success. Visitor numbers exceeded all expectations, bringing numerous awards and playing an important part in transforming York's tourism economy. A new standard had been set against which railway and transport museums would be judged internationally.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s the collections continued to grow under the terms of a condition in the 1968 Act which gave the museum the right to claim redundant railway material. This could have been a recipe for unfettered acquisition but under Coiley's thoughtful leadership, the museum established a selective and carefully prioritised collecting policy from which it has continued to derive huge benefits.

Additional premises were



Coiley in 1972 at the National Railway Museum, York, after 17 years at its helm

Photograph: Yorkshire Evening Press

acquired, notably the Railway Goods Depot across Leeman Road. By the mid-1980s plans were well advanced for its opening, thereby almost doubling the size of the museum, when serious structural problems were encountered with the concrete roof of the original hall.

A major programme was launched to replace the roof, but the core of the National Railway Collection stayed on public display throughout these works by the transfer of material to two transport exhibitions, one in York and one in Swindon. Coiley guided the museum through these turbulent affairs with quiet authority to enjoy the accolade in 1991 of the National Railway Museum

gaining the Museum of the Year Award.

Within the railway community, Coiley's name was linked inescapably with that of the National Railway Museum. Wherever the museum was involved, his courtesy and considerate presence impressed itself. All who came into contact with him felt that they had made a new friend, both of Coiley and of the museum. One result was that for those who harboured an interest in railways the museum was "theirs" in a manner unknown in most other fields.

Coiley retired in January 1992, on the eve of the next stage of expansion, leaving behind a museum which was by then the most significant in its

field anywhere in the world. Although finances were becoming overstretched, under Coiley's careful management the museum had been able to develop its photographic archives and pictorial collections, sustain a programme of conservation of locomotives and rolling stock and expand its programme of loans to other museums throughout the country.

To coincide with his retirement, a group of his friends and colleagues wrote and edited a Festschrift, *Perspectives on Railway History and Interpretation*, as a mark of the high regard in which they held him.

The growing international status of the museum had been reflected in Coiley's contribution

to the International Association of Transport Museums. After his retirement, his devotion to the museum continued through his vigorous support for the Friends of the National Railway Museum. He was an honoured guest at the 21st anniversary dinner of the Friends just a few days before his untimely death from a heart attack at Chur, Switzerland, where, characteristically, he was leading a group exploring the delights of alpine railways.

John Coiley's gentle manner masked a great sense of fun. He was an accomplished photographer, a lover of fast cars and sometime rally driver but his real achievement was to ensure that in the country of origin of the railway as we know it, there

should be a national museum of stature in which its history, technology and contemporary practice could be properly portrayed.

Neil Cossons

John Arthur Coiley, museum curator: born 29 March 1932; Scientific Officer, UKAEA, Harwell 1957-60; Scientific Officer, Aeronautics, Egham 1960-65; Development Manager, Fulmer Research Laboratories 1965-73; Assistant Keeper, Science Museum 1973-74; Keeper, National Railway Museum, York 1974-92; Member of the Board, International Association of Transport Museums 1977-91; President 1983-86; Vice-President 1986-91; married 1956 Patsy Dixon (two sons, one daughter); died Chur, Switzerland 22 May 1998.

Gene Raymond

AN ACTOR who had a long career in film, television and theatre, Gene Raymond will nevertheless be remembered as the husband of the singing star Jeanette MacDonald. Though Raymond made over 40 films, his career never equalled his wife's in stature.

Blond and dashing handsome, he was a capable leading man in many movies, but tended to play second-leads in the really big ones - he was Mary Astor's cuckolded husband in the Gable-Harlow *Red Dust* (1932) and third billed to Robert Montgomery and Carole Lombard in Hitchcock's *Mr and Mrs Smith* (1941).

One of the biggest hits in which he starred, *Flying Down to Rio* (1933), is notable more for the first learning of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, in supporting roles. The actor's most fondly remembered film is *Smilin' Through* (1941), the only time he played opposite his wife.

Born Raymond Guion in New York City in 1908 and educated at the Professional Children's School, he made his theatrical debut at the age of five and had his first Broadway

role at the age of 12. By the time he was 21 he had played major roles in five Broadway shows, including *Cradle Snatchers* (1925), in which young Humphrey Bogart was the juvenile lead.

He was billed under his real name in all these shows, but Paramount rechristened him Gene Raymond in 1931 when they brought him out to Hollywood. His first two films, *Personal Maid* (1931), with Nancy Carroll, and *Ladies of the Big House* (1931), with Sylvia Sydney, set a pattern in which he was frequently overshadowed by strong leading ladies.

In Ann Carver's *Profession* (1933) he was the weakling husband of a lawyer (Ray Way), who ends up defending him for murder, in *Brief Moment* (1933) a rich loafer reformed by the love of nightclub singer Carole Lombard, and he was also teamed with Bette Davis in *Ex-Lady* (1933), and Barbara Stanwyck in both *The Woman in Red* (1934) and the featherweight comedy *The Bride Walks Out* (1936).

Among his best films were the lyrical, beautifully photographed *Zoo in Budapest* (1933), in which he displayed a

rarely tapped sensitivity as an animal-loving young man who lives in the zoo where he works and falls in love with a runaway waif (Loretta Young) hiding there, and two films with Ann Sothern, the perky musical *Hooney for Love* (1935) and a comedy *The Smartest Girl in Town* (1936).

Raymond had a pleasant tenor voice, and introduced on screen two minor standards, Brown and Fred's "All I Do Is Dream of You" in the Joan Crawford vehicle *Sadie McKee* (1933), and with Harriet Hilliard, "Let's Have Another Cigarette" by Magidson and Wrubel.

Smilin' Through, shot in lush colour, was his last film before war service, during which he served as a pilot in the B-17 bomber group that inaugurated precision bombing.

Resuming his career, he was the fiancé of the kleptomaniac Laraine Day in the complex film noir *The Locket* (1946), then produced and directed a modest mystery movie, *Million Dollar Weekend* (1947), in which he played the starring role as an embezzler. The film was not a success, and Raymond concentrated on television and theatre.

He was host, panellist or actor on many television shows including *Firestone Theatre*, *Ironside* and *The Girl from U.N.C.L.E.* and had appeared in touring or summer stock productions of popular plays like *The Voice of the Turtle*, *Private Lives* and the musical *Kiss Me Kate*.

He also wrote several songs for his wife to perform on her concert tours. He returned to films with the thankless role of an ageing actor trying to seduce Jane Powell in the musical *Hit The Deck* (1957), but had a good role in the fine political drama written by Gore Vidal and directed by Franklin Schaffner, *The Best Man* (1964).

In 1967, as a colonel in the Air Force Reserve, he flew jets into South Vietnam on high-priority missions and won the Legion of Merit. His last film credit came in 1969 when he provided the Voice of Death in the western *Five Bloody Graves*.

Apart from an occasional character role on television he concentrated during his final years on his investments and business interests. Always involved in the affairs of the industry, he was at various times a board mem-



Raymond as the animal-loving hero in *Zoo in Budapest* (1933)

Photograph: Ronald Grant

ber of the Screen Actors Guild and Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, president of the Motion Picture and Television Fund, president of the Los Angeles chapter of the Air Force Association and vice president of the Arthritis Foundation.

He married Jeanette MacDonald in 1937 (her famous co-star Nelson Eddy sang "O Promise Me" at their wedding) and he was at her bedside when she died in 1965, her last words allegedly being "I love you". Raymond married a second

time in 1974 and was widowed again in 1995.

Tom Vallance

Raymond Guion (Gene Raymond), actor: born New York 13 August 1908; twice married; died Los Angeles 3 May 1998.

Ayatollah Shaykh Murtada al-Burujirdi

AYATOLLAH SHAYKH Murtada al-Burujirdi, who was assassinated last month, was a leading religious scholar and jurist at Najaf in Iraq, one of the Shia Muslims' holiest cities since it contains the tomb of the first Shia Imam, Amir al-Mu'minin Ali ibn Abi Talib. Najaf is also the seat of the 1,000-year-old Hawza Ilmiyya, the oldest Shia university.

Burujirdi was born in Najaf in 1931 but his family originated from the vicinity of Burujird in Iran, some 140 miles southwest of the holy city of Qom. His father, Ayatollah Shaykh Ali Muhammad, was a jurist who had taught at the Hawza at Najaf and had then become a *marja al-taqid* ("source of emulation") at Burujird where he died. At Najaf the young Mur-



Burujirdi: *marja*

tada had done his intermediate studies under his father, but at the advanced level his principal teacher was the great jurist Ayatollah Abul-Qasim al-Khoi. During this period, while still attending Khoi's lectures, Bu-

rujirdi became a *mujtahid*, (qualified to make independent juridical decisions), and taught at the Hawza. This was a feature of academic life at Najaf, where the most competent pupils of the leading ulama (religious scholars) were also teachers and scholars in their own right.

He published a 10-volume work which comprised detailed notes, complete with his annotations and comments, of Khoi's lectures on the monumental work of jurisprudence *al-Urwat al-Wuthqa* by Sayyid Muhammad Kadhimi al-Yazdi.

In 1991, after the Shia uprising in southern Iraq, Burujirdi was imprisoned along with 70 other ulama but was released after three days. It had been his custom to say his daily prayers in the Rawda, the sacred en-

closure of Imam Ali. The imam - the leader of the congregational prayers - Sayyid Muhammad Ridha al-Khalkhali, had also been put in prison, but since he was not released Burujirdi was appointed in his place.

The Baathist government, aware of the awe and esteem in which the Shia ulama were held by the people, had in the late spring of 1994 closed the Khadra Mosque in Najaf where Ayatollah Ali Seestani, today the principal *marja* in Iraq, was imam, on the pretext that essential repairs had to be carried out. They now asked Burujirdi to give up his post at the Rawda of Imam Ali. He refused vehemently.

Two years ago he was beaten up and a little over a year ago an attempt was made on his life when a hand-grenade was

thrown at him. He suffered injuries to his legs and had to remain at home for two months. He still would not give up leading the prayers, however, although thereafter he never went to the Rawda alone.

What exacerbated matters even further was Burujirdi's decision to gain recognition as a *marja* and the subsequent publication, last year, of his own collection of fatwas, his *risala amaliyya*, in two volumes: Ayatollah Seestani had been virtually under house arrest for more than three years and the government was bent on promoting its own candidate Sayyid Muhammad al-Sadr (who is prepared to co-operate with it but who lacks the credentials for being a *marja*) as a rival to Seestani.

The spectacle of Burujirdi as a *marja*, readily accessible to his followers, in addition to his leading the prayers in the Rawda, was clearly the last straw. Burujirdi would have become a symbol of resistance to the Baathist government which has for the past 30 years pursued a policy of utter ruthlessness towards the Shia ulama. Recently he was visited by a delegation from the Ministry of Awqaf (Religious Endowments) demanding his resignation from leading the prayers.

Despite their abusive and threatening language he said that he would only agree if he received an order in writing from the government. He knew this would be unlikely since he had never got involved in any political activity.

On the evening of 21 April Burujirdi was shot dead, and two

passers-by were injured, as he walked back home from the Rawda after the evening prayers. Next morning there was a funeral procession to the Rawda in which hundreds of people took part and there Ayatollah Sayyid Raddi al-Mar'ashi led the ritual funeral prayer over the deceased. Then the coffin was swiftly taken off in a car by security officers to the cemetery of Wadi al-Salam where the body was buried in haste with only Burujirdi's son, Shaykh Mahdi, and the gravediggers allowed to be present.

A. B. D. R. Eagle

Murtada al-Burujirdi, religious scholar, jurist and imam: born Najaf, Iraq 1931; married Shawkat bint Mirza Ali al-Najafi (one son, three daughters); died Najaf 21 April 1998.

John Looms

JOHN LOOMS was a leading authority on high-voltage electricity transmission and insulators who pioneered "live" working on high-voltage lines and invented vandal-proof insulators for them.

He died the day after learning that his arguments against the use of plastic insulators - which he regarded as not sufficiently tested - for new rail electrification by Railtrack and Virgin Rail, had been turned down.

Looms held patents for more than 100 inventions. They ranged over a wide variety of electrical applications, including new methods of paint-spraying for cars. On retiring from the Central Electrical Research Laboratories (CERL) at Leatherhead in 1980, he became an internationally renowned consultant. He wrote what became the standard textbook on high power transmission and insulators, *Insulators for High Voltages* (1988). Though not translated into Japanese, this now circulates widely in Japan in pirated editions.

John Looms was not destined for a career in science. His father, in the 1930s depression, thought he should opt for security in the civil service, preferably as a barrister, as he believed that there would always be jobs prosecuting criminals. The Second World War intervened and Looms served in radio and signals. His own war aim, according to his family, was to get to Scandinavia. Having seen Ingrid Bergman in *Casablanca* he declared "I'll have one of those", and ended up in Denmark where he met his future wife, Karen Bergreen.

After the war he worked first in the Inland Revenue but studied by night at Birkbeck College, London, taking an external degree in Physics. In 1951 he joined the National Physical Laboratory at Teddington. Nine years on, wanting to work in a field which had a more immediate application to people's lives, he moved, still a civil servant, to the CERL. Several of his former colleagues who had at first deplored his move away from "pure science" followed.

Looms did much of his work on insulators at what he claimed was the "most polluted of all spots", the test site at Brighton Power Station at Shoreham; it boasted a mixture of sea fogs, salt winds and industrial smoke. While here, he worked out the internationally accepted Sea Fog Test - subjecting insulators to prolonged testing under the most adverse conditions to see how long they lasted before "flashing over" (a miniature lightning discharge).

Always in his mind was the human benefit of his work. His vandal-proof insulators' chief merit, in his eyes, was that they eliminated danger to vandals - children throwing stones and sticks in the hope of breaking them.

"Live" working on power lines, doing repairs without switching the current off, had considerable economic benefits. Looms rigorously tested everything himself before allowing others near. He is believed to have been the first man anywhere to have worked with bare hands on overhead power lines at 400,000 volts. He achieved it with plastic chains to insulate the repair worker and metallised suits to protect against corona discharge from the live lines.

It was his concern for people's well-being which led to John Looms's opposition to what he believed was the insufficiently tested use of plastic in railway insulators. Trials in the American prairies and the Australian outback, he believed, should not be extended to Britain's densely populated rail-side urban areas, where the collapse of a high-voltage line across houses or a road could have appalling consequences.

Alfred Browne

John Sidney Thomas Looms, electrical engineer and imam: born London 3 August 1918; married 1947 Karen Bergreen (one son, one daughter); died East Molesey, Surrey 24 May 1998.

DEATHS

JEWELL: Peter Arundel, on 23 May 1998. Much loved by all his family. Funeral at Fen Ditton Parish Church, Cambridge, Monday 1 June, 3.30pm. Flowers to Cambridge Funeral Services, 617 Newmarket Road, Cambridge.

KYCOFF: On 24 May 1998, peacefully, after a brief illness, Dr Charles Frederick, aged 83. Dearly loved husband, brother, father, stepfather and grandfather. Funeral service on Monday 1 June at 12.30pm at the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Privet Hill, NW3, followed by private cremation. Flowers, or donations in lieu, to Save the Children Fund, desired.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

elo Leverton & Sons, 181 Haverstock Hill, NW3, telephone 0171-586 4221.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS may be telephoned to 0171-293 2002 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2011) or faxed to 0171-293 2000, and are charged at £4.50 a line (VAT extra).

Birthdays

Professor John Alderson, former chief constable, Devon and Cornwall; 76; Mr Albert Booth, former government minister; 70; Miss Faith Brown, impressionist; 51; Sir Gerald Cash, former Governor-General of the Bahamas; 81; Sir Edward du Cann, former chairman of Louth, 74; Mr Keith Darvall MP; 50; Mrs Liz Edgar, showjumper; 55; Sir Robert Evans, former chairman, British Gas; 71; Dame Thora Hird, actress; 87; Miss Sue Holderness, actress; 49; Miss Rachel Kempson, actress; 88; Dr Ashok Kumar MP; 42; Professor

Gyorgy Ligeti, composer; 75; Mr Alan McLintock, former chairman, Woolwich Building Society; 73; Sir Patrick McNair-Wilson, former MP; 69; Mr Frank Middlemass, actor; 79; Sir Philip Orton, a Lord Justice of Appeal; 65; Lord Renton of Mount Harry, former government minister; 66; Dr Charles Saumarez Smith, director, National Portrait Gallery; 44; Mr Wolfgang Schneiderhan, violinist; 83; Mr Edward Seaga, former prime minister of Jamaica; 68; Mr Julian Slade, composer; 68; Mr Richard Van Allen, operatic bass and director; 63; Sir Gordon Wolstenholme, physician; 85.

Anniversaries

Births: William Pitt the Younger, statesman; 1759; Ian Lancaster Fleming, writer and creator of "James Bond"; 1908. Deaths: Jan van der Meer (Jan Vermeer van Haarlem the Younger), painter; buried 1705; Anne Bromé, novelist; 1849; Edward, Duke of Windsor; 1972; Eric Morecambe (Eric Bartholomew), comedian; 1984. On this day: the Zuider Zee became an inland lake (as the IJsselmeer) after the dyke was built connecting North Holland with Friesland; 1932; the Orient Express train, Paris-Bucharest, ceased running

after 78 years; 1961. Today is the Feast Day of St Germanus of Paris, St Ignatius of Rostov, St Justus of Urgel, St Senator of Milan and St William of Cellone.

John Nabarro

A celebration for the life and work of Sir John Nabarro KB FRCP will be held in the Library of the Royal College of Physicians of London, 11 St Andrews Place, Regent's Park, London NW1, on Monday 22 June 1998 at 4pm. Further information may be obtained from the College Secretary.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh attend a banquet hosted by the Emperor and Empress of Japan at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London SW1. The Duke of Edinburgh, President Emeritus, World Wide Fund for Nature - WWF International, attends a lunch at Ogilvy and Mather, Clancy Wharf, London E14. The Prince of Wales, Patron, Foundation for Integrated Medicine, attends a conference at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London SW1; and, as President of the Institute of Architecture, attends a reception to mark the launch of the Orange Willenature Competition, The Prince of Wales, Patron, Save the Children Fund, attends the Conference "Dispatches from Disaster Zones" at Church House Conference Centre, London SW1; as President, British Knitting and Clothing Export Council, visits Cwrling, London W1, and Woon-

derful Waage Limited, London SW11; and, as President, Animal Health Trust, attends a dinner at Grosvenor House, Grosvenor Road, London W1. The Duke of Kent, President, Royal School of Music, attends the Royal School of Music, London W1.

Changing of the Guard The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; 1st Battalion, The Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Coldstream Guards.

The LAW REPORT resumes with the Law Term, on Tuesday 2 June.

Three
win
£32m in
Game

STOCK MARKETS

مكتبة من الأدب

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Stocks tumble across the globe

By Lea Paterson
in London
and Stephen Vines
in Hong Kong

STOCK MARKETS the world over took a tumble yesterday amid growing concerns over the impact of the Asian crisis on corporate earnings.

The UK's blue-chip FTSE 100 index fell by over 100 points, knocking nearly £20bn from the value of the country's largest companies.

"It looks as if Asia could cause world economic slow-down", said Trevor Greetham, global strategist at Merrill Lynch.

Negative market sentiment began on Tuesday in New York, where the Dow Jones finished down 150 points amid jitters over blue-chip corporate earnings. Stocks slid further when the Far East markets opened for business with Hong Kong - now predicted to enter recession for the first time since 1985 - worst hit.

Hong Kong's blue chip Hang Seng Index tumbled below the psychologically important 9,000 mark as share prices fell by 5.3 per cent, or 498 points.

When London opened for business yesterday morning, shares fell by more than 95 points - about 1.5 per cent - in the first 30 minutes. The FTSE continued to fall, touching an all-day low of 5836.9 in mid-afternoon, before recouping some of its earlier losses and finishing at 5870.2, down 100.5 points, or 1.7 per cent.

Companies with significant Asian concerns were affected most. HSBC, the banking giant which owns the UK's Midland Bank, was one of the worst hit. HSBC finished the day at 1531p, down over 100p. Standard Chartered, the London-based international banking group, finished down 40.5p at 772p.

Wall Street was sharply lower - down around 100 points at lunchtime yesterday, while the US bond market was generally higher.

Mr Greetham said: "Bond markets are doing well, and equity markets are suffering. That is usually a sign that the world economy is contracting."

In Hong Kong, where traders were poised for further falls today, investors were taken aback by a statement made by Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's chief executive, on Tuesday night. Mr Chee-hwa told foreign correspondents that growth in the region would "fall substantially and indeed may even be negative".

Howard Georges, the vice-chairman of the South China Securities broking house, said: "This comment came out of the blue. He didn't seem to offer any hope about the economy."

Mr Tung's statement also flatly contradicted a speech



An investor watches screens in Hong Kong as the markets slump yesterday

the previous week by Sir Donald Tsang in which he insisted that he had no data to support a lowering of the government's 3.5 per cent economic growth estimate for 1998. However first quarter economic growth figures will be released tomorrow which could show that the economy has gone into recession for the first time since 1985.

Yesterday Sir Donald said: "We already had a very rough last quarter in the end of 1997, we are having a very rough quarter in the first part of 1998 as well - we have to face up to these realities."

The government's economic growth forecasts are now entirely out of line with almost all private sector estimates. Yesterday HSBC Securities low-

ered its 1998 growth forecast from 2 to 1 per cent. Two finance houses, J.P.Morgan and Daiwa, are already forecasting negative growth. The OECD predicts that the economy will expand by no more than 0.9 per cent. Even the most optimistic forecast, from Bank of America, is 0.5 per cent lower than the official figure.

On top of the gloom about economic growth figures, pessimism was fuelled in Hong Kong by the release of retail sales figures for March showing a 13 per cent downturn as unemployment rose to a 14-year high of 3.9 per cent.

Meanwhile, in the all important property market which underpins the stock exchange, there were indicators of a further slump in business when fig-

ures were released showing a near 19 per cent fall in property loans. Transactions in the property market have slumped to a ten year low. Anthony Cheung, HSBC Securities chief economist, said that hopes for an improved economic performance in the second half of the year were based on revived activity across the border in mainland China.

Investors were also depressed by other news from the region where Korea entered a two day general strike in protest at lay offs, uncertainty over Indonesia continued and the Japanese Yen continued to fall, closing in the Far East at 137.7 to the United States dollar. Japanese stock prices were also down by 1.4 per cent at 15,664.29.

Sterling strengthens on fears of rate rise

By Michael Harrison
and Lea Paterson

THE RECENT spate of weakness in sterling appeared to be drawing to an end yesterday as growing City interest rate fears pushed the pound above DM2.90.

Hawkish comments from a member of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) coupled with a perceived weakening of the CBI's "the next move should be down" stance on rates re-awakened fears of an interest rate hike following next week's MPC meeting.

After a weak start, the pound gained almost a penny against the mark following a speech by Mervyn King, the Bank's chief economist and executive director, at the Building Societies annual conference.

Sterling finished the day at DM2.905, up from 2.898 on Tuesday.

Mr King, a "hawk" who voted for a rate rise at April's MPC meeting, said domestically generated inflation was "significantly higher than RPIX inflation [the measure of inflation targeted by the Government]". Mr King warned: "Inflation will start to rise above the target unless domestically generated inflation declines."

He added: "The earnings figures released earlier this month - which showed that average earnings in the economy grew by 4.9 per cent and in the private sector by no less than 5.6 per cent - were undoubtedly disappointing. To hit the inflation target those rates of

earnings growth will have to fall back."

Mr King said that even though the MPC predicted a slowdown in the economy, it might not be sufficient in itself to hold back inflation.

Meanwhile, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) indicated a slight softening over its stance on interest rates by warning that the country could not afford to trade "short-term gain for long-term pain".

Addressing the organisation's annual dinner in London last night, the CBI president Sir Colin Marshall called on the Government not to ease up in the fight against inflation.

He also gave a rare acknowledgement that the strong pound, while hurting manufacturers, exporters and inward investors, was also good news for importers, retailers and holidaymakers.

Speaking after the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, had addressed the dinner, Sir Colin said the CBI had been encouraged by the way the Government had seen eye to eye on the need for stability, sustainability and economic development.

But he added: "Central to our largely mutual philosophy is the need to combat and control inflation, ahead of almost all other economic considerations. We simply cannot afford to trade short term gain for long-term pain."

Despite yesterday's developments, most City economists still believe the outcome will be "no change" after next week's two-day MPC meeting, which will start on Wednesday.

Cellnet reveals personal tariffs

By Peter Thal Larsen

CELLNET, the UK's second largest mobile phone operator, will today unveil initiatives intended to make up the ground it has lost on its competitors.

Chief among these is a service which retrospectively adjusts phone users' bills to the most efficient tariff according to how much they use the phone.

The offer, which is part of a £20m marketing campaign which kicks off today, allows mobile users to sign up to a particular tariff, secure in the knowledge that they will receive a refund on their bill if it turns out that another tariff would have been better suited.

Peter Enskine, chief executive, said the rebates, which will be calculated on a quarterly basis, were likely to amount to "double digit percentages" off many Cellnet users' bills.

As part of its "First Cellnet" campaign, the company plans to dispense with locking new users into fixed term contracts, though discounts will be available for customers who sign up for longer periods. It will also offer extra discounts for numbers which callers use frequently.

Mr Enskine said the campaign would help Cellnet attract new users as well as hold on to existing customers. He said he aimed to reduce the rate of churn in its customer base from 30 per cent to close to 20 per cent.

At the same time, Cellnet will cut call prices and launch a "prepaid" mobile phone.

Cellnet has been a loser in the battle of the mobile phone operators recently, signing up just 300,000 new customers last year compared to more than 400,000 for Vodafone, Orange and One2One.

Three win £32m in Game

By Nigel Cope
Associate City Editor

THREE entrepreneurial brothers will share £32m when Game, the computer software retailer, comes to the market next month, after the company's shares were priced at the top end of expectations. The trio, led by chairman Neil Taylor who co-founded Game in 1990, will sell around half of their existing 48.6 per cent stake. They will retain a 22.65 per cent stake, worth £33.5m.

"We won't have a large binge but we might have a small one," Mr Taylor said. "We will certainly have some sort of celebration."

The float continues a remarkable run of entrepreneurial success for the three Taylor brothers, whose father David was managing director



Nick Warren-Smith, Game finance director, Paul Lloyd-Roach, chief executive, and Neil Taylor, chairman, celebrate their fortune outside one of their company's stores

of the Tozer Kelmsley and Millborne motor dealership group in the 1970s.

While Neil, 37, has been running Game, his 40-year-old brother Carey has been running the Metropolis recording studio in Chiswick, London. The studio is used by many top artists, including George Michael, who recorded his *Listen Without Prejudice* album there. The oldest brother, 43-year-old Chris, is no slouch

either. He co-runs a company called Origin Products which designs toys for many of the world's top toy manufacturers such as Mattel, Disney and Hasbro.

"We didn't have any money to start off with. We all made our own way," says Mr Taylor. Game's shares were priced at 200p yesterday, valuing the business at £148m. At that price the shares trade on a historic multiple of 25.3. The

company said the float had proved popular with institutions and was heavily oversubscribed.

Game is raising £8.5m net of expenses and the proceeds will be used to fund store expansion. Game opened its 66th store on Saturday and has identified 150 towns which could support a Game outlet.

The shares start trading on 3 June.

Investment column, page 24

EMI 'will stay independent' Means tests for pension

By Nigel Cope
Associate City Editor

EMI's chairman, Sir Colin Southgate, yesterday launched a stirring defence of the British music group's independence and said it need not become another trophy asset like Rolls-Royce and the Savoy that would fall to an overseas buyer.

He denied that EMI had been jilted at the altar by Seagram, the American drinks and music group which has since tied the knot with PolyGram in a \$10.6bn deal and said EMI could be successful on its own.

"EMI is still number three in the industry (behind Seagram-PolyGram and Sony), we are still independent and we still have the best figures in the industry. We have been around for 100 years and have a strong back catalogue and strong local rosters of artists. We should be jolly proud of EMI. Britain doesn't have too many companies that are number three in a global market. We still aim to be number one."

He said he had no plans to step down as chairman even though a re-shuffle at the board followed comments by him that he would prefer to continue as non-executive given his position at chairman of the Royal Opera House. "I'm only 59 and I'm not going to let EMI down after 14 years of grind, am I?"

He was speaking as EMI, whose roster of artists spans the Spice Girls, The Verve and Radiohead, reported a sharp fall in profits caused by the strength of sterling, the Far Eastern crisis and the slowdown in worldwide music sales. Profits fell from £380.5m to £307m before exceptional. However Sir Colin pointed out that EMI's share of the worldwide music market has risen from 14.3 per cent to 14.8 per cent. It US market share has risen from 9.7-12 per cent.

EMI took a £43m exceptional charge last year for the closure of its head office in New York and the £12m pay-off to Jim Field, head of EMI Music. It also showed a £101m gain, most of which related to the disposal of its HMV retail chain.

By Andrew Verity

A BODY commissioned by the Government to report on the state of pension provision in the UK is set to urge ministers to consider a form of means-testing for the Basic State Pension.

The Independent Pensions Provision Group is warning that pensioner inequality will rise massively over the next two decades if the Government goes on raising the basic state pension only in line with prices.

In a report to be published in the next two weeks, the group will set out a means by which rights to the Basic State Pension could be targeted on the poorest pensioners.

Tom Ross, chairman of the group, said: "Pensioners now get much the same whether they are well-off or poor. One has to ask whether it would be better to divert some resources to those who really need it."

The report is the most comprehensive review of pension provision undertaken and is likely to be very influential in the Government's programme

of welfare reform.

Mr Ross said one reform could restrict rights to a higher level of basic state pension - perhaps £100 a week - to those whose lifetime earnings are too low for a decent private pension. The rights of those on higher incomes would correspondingly be reduced. It would be based on lifetime income. The report is also set to explode the myth that a 'demographic timebomb' will make state benefits unaffordable as the retired population increases over the next three decades from 10 million to 15 million. "By the middle of the next century, the proportion of GDP we spend on state pensions will be less than today because the larger number of recipients will be offset by the lower level of benefits," Mr Ross said.

However, the group will report that restoring the link between the basic state pension and earnings, abolished in 1979, would boost the cost of state pensions by a quarter within decades.

Yesterday in the markets

STOCK MARKETS

Index	Close	Change	Change(%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	5870.2	-100.5	-1.68	6150.50	4382.80	3.56
FTSE 250	5880.80	-40.10	-0.68	5920.90	4384.50	2.60
FTSE 350	2882.30	-43.20	-1.49	2939.70	2141.80	3.41
FTSE All Share	2890.20	-40.84	-1.40	2951.12	2105.59	3.39
FTSE Smallcap	2713.20	-19.50	-0.70	2783.80	2182.10	2.92
FTSE Healthcare	1501.20	-3.80	-0.25	1511.00	1225.20	3.00
FTSE AIM	1136.80	-1.80	-0.14	1138.20	955.90	1.05
FTSE EURO 100	3026.73					
Dow Jones	8846.89	-120.32	-1.34	9261.91	6971.32	1.61
Nikkei	15664.29	-220.53	-1.39	20910.79	14488.21	0.97
Hang Seng	8983.49	-498.78	-5.28	16820.31	7908.13	4.45
Shanghai	6490.64	-153.85	-2.32	6664.84	3487.24	1.53

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling	UK 10 year gilt	US long bond
3 month 1 yr 5 yr 10 yr	3 month 1 yr 5 yr 10 yr	3 month 1 yr 5 yr 10 yr
7.50 7.50 7.50 7.50	5.50 5.50 5.50 5.50	5.77 5.77 5.77 5.77
5.88 5.88 5.88 5.88	5.54 5.54 5.54 5.54	5.82 5.82 5.82 5.82
5.55 5.55 5.55 5.55	5.54 5.54 5.54 5.54	5.82 5.82 5.82 5.82
3.60 3.60 3.60 3.60	5.54 5.54 5.54 5.54	5.82 5.82 5.82 5.82

CURRENCIES

\$/£	DM/£	¥/£
at Spot	at Spot	at Spot
1.6325 -0.44c 1.6290	0.6126 +0.17c 0.6138	164.45 -1.35c 164.10
1.6325 -0.44c 1.6290	0.6126 +0.17c 0.6138	164.45 -1.35c 164.10
1.6325 -0.44c 1.6290	0.6126 +0.17c 0.6138	164.45 -1.35c 164.10

TOURIST RATES

TOURIST RATES	
Australia (\$) 2.5521	Malta (lira) 0.6178
Austria (schillings) 13.72	Mexican (nuevo peso) 12.84
Belgium (francs) 58.01	Netherlands (guilders) 3.1626
Canada (\$) 2.3205	New Zealand (\$) 2.5903
Cyprus (pounds) 0.8241	Norway (krone) 11.95
Denmark (krone) 10.78	Portugal (escudos) 205.71
Finland (markka) 8.5940	Saudi Arabia (rials) 5.9604
France (francs) 9.4121	Singapore (\$) 2.5680
Germany (marks) 2.2144	Spain (pesetas) 236.11
Greece (drachma) 481.45	South Africa (rande) 8.6602
Hong Kong (\$) 12.29	Sweden (krone) 12.36
Ireland (pounds) 1.1128	Switzerland (francs) 2.3409
India (rupees) 62.06	Thailand (bahts) 57.47
Israel (shekels) 5.4955	Turkey (liras) 401873
Italy (lira) 2.782	USA (\$) 1.5979
Japan (yen) 221.87	
Malaysia (ringgits) 5.9358	

Rates for indication purposes only
Source: Thomas Cook

Rates for indication purposes only
Source: Thomas Cook

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY PETER THAL LARSEN

Anglian waits on regulator

LIKE all utilities, Anglian Water is on a regulatory treadmill. No sooner has one review been completed and digested by the markets than the next one looms into view. With water companies the problem this time round is all the worse because Ian Byatt, the water watchdog, has decided to start the review process early. So investors are now already trying to guess what decisions he will take about a new pricing structure that will not be introduced until 2000.

This is all a bit harsh on Anglian Water, which has generally shown that it can combine a good level of service – its leakage rates are the lowest in the country – with a decent return to shareholders. Yesterday it reported a 4 per cent increase in pre-tax profits and hiked the dividend by 13 per cent. Even though the market responded positively – the shares edged up half a penny to 865.5p in a falling market – most analysts agree it will be hard to form a clear idea of the stock's future potential until Mr Byatt gives a clearer idea of his intentions.

The big question is whether the regulator will favour the consumer lobby, which wants lower prices, or the environmental lobby, which wants more cash for investment. There is even an outside chance he will try to please both, leaving shareholders squeezed in the middle.

Given the sensitivity of the issue, it's not surprising that Anglian was giving little away about the scope for future cost-cutting. Plans to return 8 per cent of its capital – about £180m at the current price – to shareholders is also restrained given that it will take Anglian's gearing to just 80 per cent, from 73 per cent at the moment.

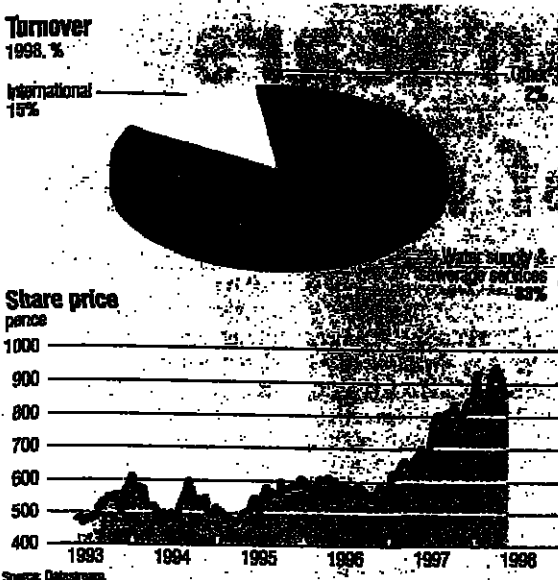
With a dividend yield of 4.5 per cent, Anglian shares should be attractive for any investor looking for income and a defensive position against a possible market downturn. In share price terms, however, they will just mark time until the regulator shows his hand.

Airtours loss can bring gain

IT WOULD probably be better if Airtours didn't report interim profits at all. In a business which is so seasonal that all its profits are made in a few months in the second half of the year, the travel group's first-half figures are usually meaningless. But that doesn't stop the market from scrutinising them for signs of what is to come.

Anglian Water: A glance

Market value: £2.2bn, share price: 865.5p (15p)					
Trading record	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Turnover (£m)	688	720	770	807	850
Pre-tax profits (£m)	132	216	239	208	274
Earnings per share (p)	0.65	1.05	1.15	1.00	1.35
Dividends per share (p)	27.8	26.0	30.0	34.5	39.0



Share price
pence
1000
900
800
700
600
500
400
1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998
Source: Datastream

Timely float for Game

THINGS may be a little patchy on the high street at the moment but no one seems to have told the computer games retailers which have been having a storming run. Given the popularity of the sector at the moment Game has timed its float nicely. The market for entertainment software is growing and the City has watched the zooming share price of Electronics Boutique, the main quoted rival.

The institutional placing at Game has already proved a success at 200p per share. The question now is whether smaller investors should follow suit when trading in the shares begins next week.

The issue has certainly not been priced cheaply. At these levels the shares trade on a historic rating of 25.

While the two companies are bracketed together, there are important differences. The product mix is broadly the same, as is pricing, but while EB's stores are smaller with a "no frills" lay-out, Game operates from larger outlets with a more design-led interior. Analysts also point at that while EB is already reaching saturation point with 152 stores Game has just 66 so still has plenty of scope for growth.

Dixons offers a potential competitive threat. Game points out that the small size of Dixons stores and the range of merchandise it has to carry means it will not be able to be authoritative in its offering.

At 200p the shares offer reasonable prospects. If they go to a healthy premium on 3 June they may start to look expensive. But worth a look.

Thorn in complete overseas sell-off

By Nigel Cope
Associate City Editor

THORN, the struggling Radio Rentals group whose shares have halved since it was demerged from EMI, has put all its overseas businesses up for sale as part of a radical restructuring designed to improve returns to shareholders.

In addition to the American operations, which were put up for sale earlier this year, the company yesterday said it will sell its Scandinavian operations, its Asian interests and its business-to-business division, which operates in 15 European countries.

The sale of the US business which trades under the Rent-a-Center and U-Car-Rent names, is at the shortlist stage and should be completed in the next few months, the company said.

The proceeds of the disposals are expected to be returned to shareholders rather than reinvested in the rentals business, which is in long-term decline. Thorn plans to concentrate its energies on its UK

Radio Rentals and DER businesses.

Thorn's chief executive, Steve Russell, said the whole break-up process could take up to 18 months. Thorn has made £40m of provisions to cover the restructuring and the costs of pulling out of certain product lines like personal computers and cookers.

However, there were few clues on a possible bid for the whole of Thorn following an announcement last month that it was in preliminary discussions that might lead to an offer. The approach is understood to have been from the secretive Barclay brothers.

"No formal proposal has yet been received and shareholders should not assume that an offer will be forthcoming," the company said. Negotiations are still continuing but are proceeding slowly due to the legal complications in the US, where Thorn is facing litigation over rental agreements.

Analysts were cool on the prospects for a full-scale bid for the whole of Thorn and did not



The Barclay brothers, understood to be in talks about a bid

feel the break-up would create much additional value. SG Securities put a total break-up value of 215p per share on the business compared to yesterday's closing price of 204p, up 0.5p.

Another analyst said, "I wouldn't be surprised if there is nothing left of Thorn in a year's time." With the overseas business being sold and the UK businesses shrinking, the rump of Thorn would be vulnerable to a bid by financial buyers or a management buy-out.

"The UK business is a pig in a poke," one said. "New products haven't delivered sales growth and they are back-ped-

alling on Crazy George's." Thorn now plans to extend the lower priced Crazy George's format to just 160 outlets compared to previous forecasts of 250.

The comments came as Thorn reported a 31 per cent fall in full year pre-tax profits to £118m caused by poor sales in the first half and the impact of the insurance premium tax. Thorn admitted that sales in its Radio Rentals outlets were falling faster than those at Granada, the rival chain.

Thorn plans to expand its DER Direct business which operates via a telephone sales centre in Scotland.

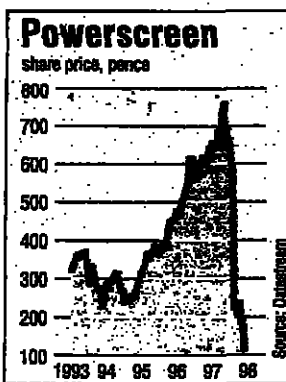
Powerscreen's pre-tax loss forecast increases to £65m

POWERSCREEN International's prospects took a further blow yesterday after it increased an earlier pre-tax loss forecast by a factor of more than six.

The Belfast-based engineering group, already the subject of a Serious Fraud Office inquiry into its Matbro subsidiary after a profit warning in January, said that it would make a loss before tax of £65m in 1997.

"People were expecting another warning but the size of this is surprising – it's a £100m turnaround in a year," Philip Molloy, an equity analyst at ABN AMRO in Dublin said. "Powerscreen's survival in its current state is now in doubt."

In January, the company announced accounting irregularities at its Matbro Ltd subsidiary and warned that it



expected a pre-tax loss of £10m, compared with a £42.4m profit the previous year.

"It has become apparent that the profitability in aggregate of the other group businesses has fallen short of the management's expectations by approximately £10 million," the company said.

Powerscreen said the £65m loss would include £58.6m losses from the Matbro division, including a further £28m trading losses and an estimated £4m in professional fees resulting from the investigation into Matbro.

Earlier this month, Powerscreen said it would continue to co-operate fully with regulators following an announcement that the Serious Fraud Office planned to investigate accounting irregularities at Matbro. The irregularities involved the mispricing of machines, unauthorised discounts offered to customers, and inaccurate and misleading recording and discounting of bills of exchange and warranty costs, the company said.

The pre-tax loss would also include writing off £11.5m of assets, and £14m for changes in

accounting policies, it said. Some £20m of the overall loss for the financial year could relate to prior financial years, it added.

"This is the first time they've said this and it's a very worrying development," said Mr Molloy. "Previously, they said the losses were all related to this year."

Other analysts in the Dublin market said a buy-out of Powerscreen looked unlikely. Analysts estimate Powerscreen's current capitalisation at around £100m.

On Tuesday the stock dived by more than 21 per cent in London after a large parcel of stock was sold at a substantial discount to the prevailing market price. The shares started the year at 608p. Yesterday they closed down 23p at 110.5p.

Energis may bid for new mobile licences

By Peter Thal Larsen

ENERGIS, the telecom operator which has built a network by laying its lines along the National Grid's power cables, is interested in bidding for the new generation of mobile phone licences which will be sold off by the government next summer.

Mike Grabiner, chief executive, said Energis was talking to NM Rothschild, the merchant bank which is advising the government on the sale, about the licences. "It would enable us to deliver more broadband data services," he said.

However, he stressed that many details were not yet clear. "We're trying to find out more," he said.

The Government confirmed earlier this month that it planned to auction licences for the next generation of mobile phones – also known as Universal Mobile Telephony Services – in the summer of 1999. The phones will allow faster rates of data transmission than are currently possible, making it possible for users to surf the Internet, access their bank account and even watch real-time video from their mobile handset.

Energis is already offering similar high-speed services through its existing fixed network. "A licence would make an excellent addition to Energis' broadband capability," said Chris Godsmark, telecoms analyst at Henderson Crosthwaite, adding that Energis would probably link up with an existing mobile phone operator to launch a joint bid.

The news emerged as Energis reported a 73 per cent increase in turnover to £168m for the year to March – ahead of analysts' expectations. Earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation were £16.1m, compared to a £14.3m loss in 1997.

Energis also announced that it now has the technology to operate private data networks on behalf of its clients. This allows them to dispense with buying expensive equipment to run long-distance networks such as corporate intranets.

Energis has gained access to the technology, which can offer the capacity equivalent to thousands of modems in a single box through its alliance with the US telecom equipment manufacturer Nortel.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Airtours (t)	1,038m (916.4m)	-32.2m (-12.7m)	-4.90p (-2.73p)	1.5p (1.33p)
Adlabs (t)	287.7m (287.8m)	16.9m (16.9m)	14.8p (15.0p)	3.4p (3.0p)
Anglian Water (t)	850.1m (837.1m)	274.2m (206.0m)	41.7p (38.6p)	39.0p (34.5p)
BBB Design (t)	0.563m (0.567m)	0.009m (0.059m)	0.11p (-0.71p)	nil (nil)
Wrights (t)	2.83m (1.188m)	0.282m (-0.293m)	0.05p (-0.24p)	nil (nil)
British Airways (t)	6.8m (6.3m)	980.0m (940.0m)	44.7p (35.7p)	18.0p (15.0p)
Brinkley Group (t)	28.2m (27.7m)	7.947m (6.588m)	12.3p (11.8p)	4.8p (4.0p)
Crabtree (t)	24.1m (22.8m)	0.830m (0.448m)	2.9p (1.5p)	1.0p (1.0p)
EMI Group (t)†	3.8m (3.4m)	307.1m (380.5m)	24.6p (26.5p)	18.0p (15.0p)
Freemove Heavy & Stone (t)	15.8m (20.5m)	3.38m (0.991m)	5.43p (14.44p)	nil (nil)
Thorn (t)	1,269m (1,332m)	118.2m (171.0m)	20.3p (26.0p)	- (-)

(t) = Total (t) = Interim † EPS in pre-exceptional * Dividend to be paid as a FID

L&G sells Australian unit

LEGAL & GENERAL said it would record a £316m pre-tax profit in its 1998 accounts from the sale of its Australian business to Colonial yesterday. The proceeds of the sale, net of costs, are estimated at £333m in cash. The sale is conditional on regulatory approval, which L&G said it expected to receive by 30 June.

L&G said that after debt repayment, the net proceeds of the sale would be retained to further its organic growth. "Legal and General Australia

is a business with many strengths which has performed well in recent years," said L&G's chief executive, David Prosser. "However, consolidation is taking place in the Australian marketplace and we believe that our shareholders are best served by exiting that market."

Colonial said it would pay A\$892m (£350m) for Legal & General Australia. Finance analysts and brokers suggested the purchase was expensive, but Colonial's group managing di-

rector, Peter Smedley, said the buy would be earnings-per-share positive within a year, and lead to major cost savings. Colonial had paid 2.5 times book value, compared with insurance industry average for takeovers of 1.5 times, analysts said.

Colonial, a former mutual group, listed on the Australian stock exchange in May last year. The purchase lifts Colonial two places to become Australia's third largest insurer in terms of annual premiums.

Michael Hart quits Foreign

By Lea Paterson

MICHAEL HART, the former head of the investment trust trade body who has become embroiled in controversy in recent months, resigned from another City post yesterday.

The former director-general of the Association of Investment Trust Companies (AITC) has quit as a director of the Foreign & Colonial Emerging Markets Investment Trust.

Last year, Mr Hart, formerly a manager of Foreign &

Colonial's flagship investment trust, became embroiled in a corporate governance row with Hermes Investment Management. Hermes said that boards of investment trust companies should become more independent of their fund managers. In particular, Hermes said the practice of allowing employees of fund managers to also sit on the board of an investment trust and judge fund managers' performance could lead to a conflict of interest.

Hermes, together with City

of London fund managers, used its shareholdings to oust the entire board of the Brazilian Smaller Companies Investment Trust at the end of January. Mr Hart had been chairman of the trust at the same time as working for Foreign & Colonial, the fund manager.

Foreign & Colonial later barred employees from sitting on the board of any investment trust whose funds it managed.

Foreign & Colonial Emerging Markets said Mr Hart had left to pursue other interests.

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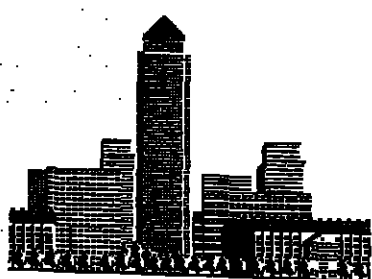
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OUTLOOK ON DELAYS TO BA'S AMERICAN LINK, IONICA'S PROBLEMS AND WHY NEWCASTLE'S HEAD-HUNTING WILL BE HARD

In the end, Ayling may have to take off

BOB Ayling thinks that the staff turnover at British Airways is too low so he wants more people to leave the airline. In case you were wondering, he is not about to take his own advice and quit the chief executive's post for a plum job in the Government. He may be a fan of Tony Blair but right now he likes BA more and he has reassured his chairman of that.

Most of us would reckon that a company which cannot hang on to its staff is a poor one whereas the company that no one wants to leave is a good employer. And so BA is. It's just that Mr Ayling thinks it can be made even better if he can just ease out the people he no longer wants and bring in those he does. It is a familiar story.

In order to achieve its target of recruiting 15,000 staff into customer friendly jobs over the next three years whilst limiting the net increase in the workforce to 7,500, BA will have to roughly double its rate of natural wastage from 2 per cent to 4 per cent.

This is a tall order for a business where the perk of free flights goes a long way to encouraging staff loyalty. But BA is resigned to throwing money at the problem and those who can be priced away by early retirement schemes can expect very generous settlement terms.

Unfortunately, this process of shrinking the airline while simultaneously growing it is an expensive business. Thus BA contrived to report a 10 per cent fall in profits last year despite achieving £250m worth of savings through its Business Efficiency Plan.

BA says the decline in profitability was due to currency losses and one-off strike costs. But it rather makes the point that running in order just to stand still is not enough when external turbulence can still knock you badly off course.

The City wonders when all these efficiency gains are going to start falling through to the bottom line. In the meantime the shares continue to underperform and the goal of £1bn in pre-tax profits to match the £1bn of efficiency gains BA has promised looks as far away as ever.

There is, of course, one way that BA's profits could lift off and that is if it finally gets regulatory approval for its alliance with American Airlines. Forget all that talk about increased competition across the Atlantic squeezing BA's margins. Even if BA/AA do sacrifice 300 slots, their combined market dominance will produce big profits.

However, the alliance is still not a done deal. BA and AA are about to celebrate the second anniversary of signing the deal and even with a following wind it could not now be launched until summer, 1999. If the alliance is not cleared for take-off this autumn, Mr Ayling may well be on the telephone to Mr Blair.

Breakdown in communications

THE TELECOMS company Ionica inhabits two parallel worlds. In one, customers cannot sign up fast enough for its revolutionary wireless telephone service,

drawn by the promise of 10 per cent off their existing bill and a funky black box on the outside wall. In fact, Ionica's problem is not lack of demand but lack of capacity.

In the other world, investors cannot sell their Ionica shares quickly enough. It has been one of the stock market's all-time duff investments. In fact, the question is not if but when the company will go out of business.

More and more frequently these days the two worlds collide and Ionica's management is forced to explain to a bemused staff why a company that was launched with such high hopes is now regarded as the pariah of the Square Mile.

The answer lies in relative expectations and, in the City, the expectations of Ionica are not good. Yesterday the shares drifted down another 11.5p to close at 24.5p compared with an issue price of 390p less than a year ago when SBC Warburg Dillon Read brought Ionica to market. Even though there is 50p a share of cash in the business, it is trading at less than the break-up value of its assets.

And yet Ionica's basic proposition remains a good one. It has targeted the local loop (known to the rest of us as the domestic market) where, as BT proves every day, profits are easier to earn than in long-distance. What's more Ionica's technology allows it to sign up customers for a fraction of the cost of the cable companies.

Where Ionica has come unstuck is in the execution. It underestimated the complexity and cost of rolling out its network

of base stations and it did not have the software ready in time to meet initial customer demand. The result is that roll-out is at least two years behind schedule, customer connections are not being achieved at the rate promised and the banks have said no more money until new equity investment is brought into the business.

A further question mark over Ionica is whether it will miss out on the explosion in data traffic because of the nature of its technology and the decision to concentrate on domestic not business customers. This remains an unknown.

The funding gap is also not known with any precision. But Ionica will need to find at least another £700m on top of the £600m already raised to complete the network. Or someone else will.

The prospect of massive dilution helps explain why the share price has taken it so badly. But at the same time it makes Ionica an interesting proposition for a big foreign investor like Deutsche Telekom. If Ionica can find the right kind of strategic investor, then they will be able to pick up a business that already covers one in eight UK homes for a fraction of the price investors paid last July. It will be brutal for existing shareholders but all may not be lost just yet for the company itself.

Antics in the boardroom

NEWCASTLE United are going to be spending the close season in the transfer

market. They already needed some new talent on the field. But now they are also looking to hire a couple of non-executive directors, one of whom can act as chairman of the club.

Yesterday's departure of the midfield duo of Sir Terence Harrison and John Mayo demonstrates that if corporate governance did indeed score a victory in March when Douglas Hall and Freddie Shepherd were eased out, it was at best a pyrrhic one.

Shareholders and fans (largely one in the same at Newcastle) might wonder what is going on.

Although the two men whose antics in a Spanish brothel caused so much angst, have gone, little else has changed. Cameron Hall Developments, Mr Hall's company, and Shepherd Offshore, still control a majority of the shares and their nominees sit on the board.

Neither man looks in any hurry to reduce that shareholding to under 50 per cent - the promise that was dangled before shareholders in March. Meanwhile, there is just one independent non-executive left on the board - and that is the accident prone Denis Cassidy. This board, laden down as it is with Hall and Shepherd nominees or employees, is the one that will now seek a new chairman.

The company says rather smugly that it will need to be someone who passes the "smell test". If anything, it is the candidates who are more likely to turn their noses up.

BA plans more jobs as profits fall sharply

By Michael Harrison

BRITISH AIRWAYS yesterday shrugged off a sharp fall in profits by hinting that approval for its long-delayed alliance with American Airlines is in sight and unveiling fresh plans to expand the workforce and increase efficiency savings.

Bob Ayling, chief executive, said BA had identified further efficiency measures worth £300m - putting it on target to achieve £1bn of cost savings by 2000. He also said the workforce would increase by 7,500 to just under 70,000 over the next three years.

Mr Ayling said that BA was now in the "final straight" in its long battle to gain regulatory clearance from London, Washington and Brussels for the tie-up with American. But he conceded that even with regu-

latory approval by this autumn the alliance would not now be launched until next summer - three years after the agreement was signed.

The BA chief executive also brushed aside reports that he was thinking of quitting the airline to take up a senior position within the Blair government. "I have not received any offer, I don't expect to receive one and I am not seeking one," he said. "The chairman [Sir Colin Marshall] has asked if he could count on me staying at BA and I said he could."

Mr Ayling was speaking as BA announced a 10 per cent fall in pre-tax profits last year to £580m. The strength of sterling knocked £200 off profits and last summer's cabin crew strikes cost a further £125m.

The airline also lost "tens of millions of pounds" because of



Sir Colin Marshall and Bob Ayling of BA, which was badly hit by the strength of sterling and a cabin crew strike

the terrorist attack on Luxor, the decision to stop flying to Nigeria and the security stand-off at Paris airport over BA's insistence that its check-in area be moved away from that of Air Algerie.

But these losses were offset by a £115m saving from lower fuel prices and higher than expected efficiency savings.

The efficiency measures so far implemented by BA - mainly outsourcing and renegotiat-

ing wage deals - saved £250m last year and are expected to save £500m in the current year.

By 2000 they will be contributing £700m in savings. But BA has identified scope for a further £250m in savings at its subsidiary airlines and in areas like overseas ground handling, distribution, telesales and travel agents' commissions.

As part of its expansion plans BA intends to take on an-

other 15,000 employees in the next three years in customer service, cabin crew, flight deck and teleales.

At the same time, it will shed about 7,500 jobs in areas such as ground handling and engineering but also cabin staff and check-in staff through voluntary redundancy programmes.

This means that staff turnover - currently running at about 2 per cent a year - will

need to double. BA set aside £127m in 1996 to cover redundancy charges, of which it has about £35m left.

Despite the latest obstacle put in the path of the AA alliance by the US Justice Department, Mr Ayling said: "I am hopeful that there is now a basis for agreement which will satisfy the various regulators and the two companies."

Outlook, this page

Nationwide scraps fees for more than 30 services

NATIONWIDE, the UK's largest building society, is to abolish fees for more than 30 services, a move which it reckons could save its customers more than £12m a year.

The building society said that from 1 June, it would no longer charge customers for obtaining duplicate statements, stopping cheques, changing building insurance to an alternative provider, or using LINK cash machines.

"Nationwide is underlining its commitment to make membership of the society mean more, in a way which sets it apart from its competitors,"

said a spokesman.

Brian Davis, Nationwide's chief executive, said: "As a building society we are not driven to maximise the profit we make out of our customers at every turn. We can therefore not only listen to these concerns [customer concerns] but act on them."

Nationwide, which has seen many of its competitors convert to banks and float on the stock market, remains committed to the principal of mutual ownership.

The building society is confident its members will vote to

retain its mutual status this summer, according to company sources.

The society is facing a second attempt to force it to convert to a plc at its annual general meeting of members on July 23. Two demutualisation candidates are seeking election to the board.

Last year, Michael Hardern failed in his attempt to be elected to the board on a demutualisation ticket. Under-terred, Mr Hardern has chosen to stand again this year. Andrew Muir is the other demutualisation candidate standing for election.

Talks resume on IMF's \$43bn rescue package to Indonesia

By Stephen Vines in Hong Kong

TALKS on the resumption of International Monetary Fund (IMF) aid to Indonesia began again yesterday forcing the new government and its international creditors to find a way of meeting the IMF's demands without sparking off more rioting.

The cost of recent events has yet to be calculated, but Nomura Securities Singapore forecasts a 10 per cent economic decline, largely based on the attacks on the ethnic Chinese business community.

Leading the IMF team is Hubert Neiss, the fund's Asia-Pacific director. He said, "Political stability is extremely important for economic progress."

B.J. Habibie, the new president, has pledged to honour the tough terms of the IMF's \$43bn rescue package, but has not indicated how.

Moreover, targets agreed with the IMF in April are looking increasingly academic. Inflation is running at 50 per cent, trading on the stock exchange has ground to a halt, aside from a rush out of shares associated with Suharto family interests,

and independent estimates put private sector debt at \$80bn.

British lenders, primarily HSBC Holdings, have some \$4.3bn at risk.

Because it is unclear how long President Habibie will be able to cling to power, the IMF is breaking its practice of shunning talks with opposition leaders. Mr Neiss will meet Amien Rais and Megawati Sukarnoputri, the two most prominent, as well as the trade union leader Muchtar Pakpahan, who has just been released from jail and is a prominent opponent of the IMF rescue package.

IN BRIEF

Eastern Gas is cleared of allegations, says regulator

OFGAS yesterday said its investigation into Eastern Natural Gas (Retail) Ltd has cleared the company of allegations of fraudulent behaviour and added that it will not confirm a provisional order placed on Northern Electric earlier in the year. Ofgas investigated both Eastern Natural Gas and Northern Electric following media reports alleging high-pressure doorstep sales techniques. "Eastern has given formal voluntary undertakings to the regulator that it will improve its methods of recruiting and training sales representatives and the way in which it conducts after-sales audits," Ofgas said. It added that it has asked Eastern to review the payment methods available to customers in the North-west of England.

Ofgas said it has also reviewed the action taken by Northern Electric following the imposition of a provisional order on the company in March. The remedial action taken by the company has satisfied Ofgas that it is not necessary for the order to be confirmed, it said. Commenting on the two investigations, Ofgas director general of gas supply, Claire Spottiswoode said: "Our latest figures show that the number of complaints on doorstep selling peaked at the end of March and declined by almost 40 per cent in April. This is good news and shows that the new marketing condition which Ofgas added to the supply licence this year, is having an effect."

New Look offer at up to 175p

NEW LOOK, the fashion retailer, said yesterday it has set its offer price range at 155p-175p per share. Announcing the listing particulars for its placing, intermediaries offer and employee offer, New Look said its market capitalisation at the mid-point of the offer price range would be £330m. New Look said the offers are expected to raise approximately £125m. Of this total, £82m is being raised for the company, of which approximately £40m will be used to redeem certain of the company's preference shares and pay accrued dividends up to the date of the admission. New Look said. The balance of £42m will be employed to reduce net debt. The intermediaries and employee offers both opened today.

Managers proud to be green

UK managers see themselves as environmentally aware, with nearly 90 per cent saying that they personally take action to help the environment at work, but often this does not translate into company-wide policies, according to a report "A Green and Pleasant Land?" published today by the Institute of Management and Electrolux UK. Tony Juniper, campaigns director at Friends of the Earth, said that the report confirmed that, despite all the green assurances of recent years, "environmental policy is driven by fear of paying out compensation for the damage they cause or because of threats to their public relations". Such incentives were insufficient to ensure that the environment was protected.

Bootleggers harm Gallagher

THE CIGARETTE maker Gallagher warned yesterday that bootlegging of tobacco from mainland Europe, where taxes are much lower than in Britain, remains a "significant issue". The company said sales fell in the legitimate domestic cigarette market by just over 4 per cent during the first three months of this year, but chairman Peter Wilson told shareholders at the annual meeting he believed the market "may well be roughly flat" because "bootlegging". "The UK government needs to take the whole issue of smuggling more seriously - ultimately it is the small retailer who is being punished," said Wilson. Gallagher, the country's biggest tobacco company, owns the best-selling cigarette brand Benson and Hedges as well as leading low tar brand Silk Cut. Britain has 12 million smokers, consuming about 77 billion cigarettes. Gallagher shares fell 0.75p to 309.25p.

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Footsie dives as Far East worries return

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

Asia returned to haunt the stock market, sending Footsie tumbling 100.5 points to 5,870.2.

A tide of woe seemed to flow from the Far East. Worries of another wave of bad debts prompted Moody's, the credit agency, to cut its rating for five leading Japanese banks, and Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's chief executive, warned that the former colony's economy was likely to shrink because of the Asian downturn. The threat to Indonesian contracts also hurt.

With the Hong Kong and Tokyo share markets weak, New York giving ground on the Pacific problems and markets like Moscow in free-fall, there was little incentive for buyers to struggle for stock.

But nevertheless they were out in some force. "The quality of the buying has been much higher than the selling," observed one market man.

The Moscow market, which has attracted consider-

able amounts of foreign cash, is creating increasing unease in some investment houses. In panicky trading it fell more than 7 per cent. Last week it suffered a 12 per cent fall.

Only 15 Footsie stocks managed to make progress. Halifax led the pack with a 48p jump to 923p.

The former building society was inspired by its signalled arrival tomorrow in the Morgan Stanley international index which should make the shares more attractive to US and European investors.

An alleged approach to Royal Bank of Scotland was another influence. Any such initiative by the cash-rich Halifax was construed as a management attempt to put the group in play. Royal Bank, it was said, rejected the Halifax overture; its shares fell 5p to 1,025p.

Most financials, particularly those with Far Eastern associations, retreated. HSBC slumped 109p to 1,531p and

Standard Chartered 40.5p to 772p.

Others lowered included Bank of Scotland and the yet-to-be consummated merger - Commercial Union and General Accident.

Misys, the first computer group to achieve Footsie membership, was another blue chip to throw off the gloom clouds. It jumped 166p to 3,534p.

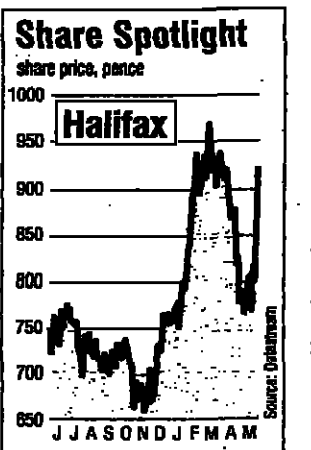
Blue Circle Industries, 7.75p to 388.75p, and Granada, 16p to 1,135p, strengthened.

The Footsie downturn was too much for the supporting indices. The mid and small cap measurements were hit hard. Marketing group Taylor Nelson, which has moved into the mid cap index, hardened 2.5p to 134.5p and Seion Healthcare, expected to join following the takeover of Scholl, improved 50p to 822.5p as tracker funds looked for stock.

The Falkland Islands trust came under pressure. Suggestions that Amerasia Hess,

the US group, has not found commercial quantities of oil and gas off the Falklands did the damage. The Americans said they would report on their drilling by the end of this month.

When they have finished, the Bognor Dolphin rig will move to where the Lismo-led consortium will search. Lismo has a 62.5 per cent stake. Desire



Petroleum 25 per cent and a Canadian group, led 12.5 per cent.

John Gilmour, analyst at Matheson Securities, is unimpressed by the likelihood of the Amerasia Hess drill being successful. "One must remember that in the North Sea 19 wells were drilled before a commercial discovery was made," he said.

Desire, which had led the Falklands charge, fell 67.5p to 377.5p. Greenwich Resources lost 4.5p to 35.75p and Westmount 47.5p to 227.5p. Lismo, which may have struck it rich in Pakistan, fell 2p to 295.5p.

Hilldown Holdings was busily traded on the expected Unigate bid. The shares held at 198.5p. Break-up hopes lifted Booker 4p to 283.5p.

Cadbury Schweppes, meeting analysts next week, fell 25p to 932p, and Kingfisher, showing researchers Darty, its French electrical chain later this month, shaded 7p to 1,083p. Engineer BBA, with an investment meeting at Hen-

derson Crosthwaite, hardened 4p to 531p.

Profits warnings took their toll. Hall Engineering slumped 57p to 200p; Whitecroft, an industrial group, 27.5p to 81p and engineer Crabtree 12p to 57.5p.

Engineer Powerscreen weakened 22p to 110.5p after reporting a £65m loss. The Stock Exchange is said to be investigating dealings in the shares ahead of the figures. On Friday an institutional investor sold 670,000 shares well below the then market price.

Philippine Gold jumped 4p to 17.5p on a smattering of small buy orders with some suggesting an encouraging statement will be made.

PhoneLink, up 4.5p to 55p, said it was in talks which could lead to two acquisitions. Tom Hoskins, the little brewer and pub-owner, frothed 2.5p to 37.5p. Fairacres Group, running the Sandbanks ferry off Poole in Dorset, has acquired 27.42 per cent from former director Fred Ward.

TAKING STOCK

CALLUNA, an electronics group, put on 3.5p to 34p; the price, 46.25p a year ago, was down to 8.5p at the start of the year. The sparky run stems from unrelated US influences. A transatlantic rival is in financial difficulties and there seem to be strengthening hopes of a major American deal. According to the rumour mill, Calluna's "hardwall" system, aimed at preventing hackers getting into computer networks, has attracted the attention of the Pentagon which is said to be keen to take on the company's product.

SHARES OF JEX Oil & Gas shaded to 31.5p but could suffer a sharp fall later. The company, the subject of a fierce takeover battle last year, produced increased losses of £3.3m. A £54m takeover bid by Ramco Energy was defeated by Ukrzazprom, the Ukrainian state-owned oil company, which waded into the stock market, buying a 22 per cent blocking stake and forcing Ramco to walk away.

High Low Stock

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	Alcoholic Beverages					
52	52	Alcoholic Beverages	4.50	-1.0	82	100	
52	52	Alcoholic Beverages	3.20	-0.2	82	100	
52	52	Alcoholic Beverages	3.20	-0.2	82	100	
52	52	Alcoholic Beverages	3.20	-0.2	82	100	

Banks, Merchant

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	Banks, Merchant					
52	52	Banks, Merchant	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Banks, Merchant	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Banks, Merchant	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Banks, Merchant	1.50	-0.1	82	100	

Banks, Retail

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	Banks, Retail					
52	52	Banks, Retail	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Banks, Retail	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Banks, Retail	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Banks, Retail	1.50	-0.1	82	100	

Breweries Pubs & Rest

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	Breweries Pubs & Rest					
52	52	Breweries Pubs & Rest	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Breweries Pubs & Rest	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Breweries Pubs & Rest	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Breweries Pubs & Rest	1.50	-0.1	82	100	

Building/Construction

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	Building/Construction					
52	52	Building/Construction	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Building/Construction	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Building/Construction	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Building/Construction	1.50	-0.1	82	100	

Electronics

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	Electronics					
52	52	Electronics	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Electronics	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Electronics	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Electronics	1.50	-0.1	82	100	

Food Producers

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	Food Producers					
52	52	Food Producers	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Food Producers	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Food Producers	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Food Producers	1.50	-0.1	82	100	

Gas Distribution

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	Gas Distribution					
52	52	Gas Distribution	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Gas Distribution	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Gas Distribution	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Gas Distribution	1.50	-0.1	82	100	

Health Care

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	Health Care					
52	52	Health Care	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Health Care	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Health Care	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Health Care	1.50	-0.1	82	100	

Household Goods

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	Household Goods					
52	52	Household Goods	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Household Goods	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Household Goods	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Household Goods	1.50	-0.1	82	100	

Insurance

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	Insurance					
52	52	Insurance	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Insurance	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Insurance	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Insurance	1.50	-0.1	82	100	

Investment Trusts

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	Investment Trusts					
52	52	Investment Trusts	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Investment Trusts	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Investment Trusts	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Investment Trusts	1.50	-0.1	82	100	

Life Assurance

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	Life Assurance					
52	52	Life Assurance	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Life Assurance	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Life Assurance	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Life Assurance	1.50	-0.1	82	100	

Media

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	Media					
52	52	Media	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Media	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Media	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Media	1.50	-0.1	82	100	

Pharmaceuticals

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	Pharmaceuticals					
52	52	Pharmaceuticals	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Pharmaceuticals	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Pharmaceuticals	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Pharmaceuticals	1.50	-0.1	82	100	

Property

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	Property					
52	52	Property	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Property	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Property	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Property	1.50	-0.1	82	100	

Support Services

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	Support Services					
52	52	Support Services	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Support Services	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Support Services	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Support Services	1.50	-0.1	82	100	

Telecommunications

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	Telecommunications					
52	52	Telecommunications	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Telecommunications	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Telecommunications	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Telecommunications	1.50	-0.1	82	100	

High Low Stock

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	High Low Stock					
52	52	High Low Stock	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	High Low Stock	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	High Low Stock	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	High Low Stock	1.50	-0.1	82	100	

Banks, Merchant

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	Banks, Merchant					
52	52	Banks, Merchant	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Banks, Merchant	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Banks, Merchant	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Banks, Merchant	1.50	-0.1	82	100	

Banks, Retail

High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Code
52	52	Banks, Retail					
52	52	Banks, Retail	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Banks, Retail	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Banks, Retail	1.50	-0.1	82	100	
52	52	Banks, Retail	1.50	-0.1	82	100	

Breweries Pubs & Rest

222	Syzyx	289.50	-	-	7.5	0	10
155	Texas Prod	564.00	-	-	10.0	7.4	4
580	Trifast	640.00	-	-	2.0	23.9	128
132	Trinidadian Grp	89.00	-5.00	7.4	29.8	0	
300	UMECO	405.00	-	-	1.8	26.1	2089
78	Uncl Of Oresns Cp	103.00	+2.50	1.3	28.1	2024	Fr
238	Vardy (Reg)	271.50	-	-	3.5	12.5	4577

There's no need to throw the bubbles out with the bathwater



**DIANE COYLE
WONDERS
WHETHER A
TAX WILL CURB
BUBBLE
SPECULATORS**

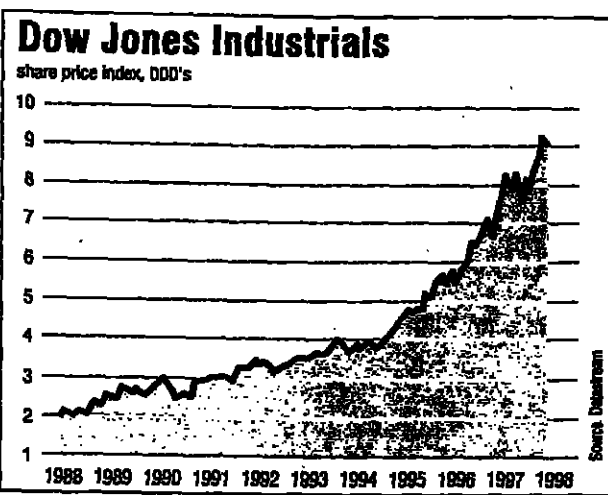
"THERE'S a sucker born every minute," the American impresario P.T. Barnum famously claimed. The Barnum theory, applied to the financial markets, has been enjoying a new lease of life in the wake of last year's Asian crash. To many commentators those events confirm that the markets are fuelled by speculative bubbles, with a hundred suckers for every Soros. And this explanation has given a new lease of life to proposals for a tax on international currency trades in order to discourage frothy speculation - a so-called Tobin Tax after its foremost advocate, the Nobel Laureate James Tobin.

This is the reasoning. Currency markets are obviously necessary to finance bona fide trade and investment, but all too easily speculative bubbles emerge which drive exchange rates far away from the levels that would be justified by economic fundamentals such as future GDP growth, inflation and export prospects. A small tax on currency transactions, however, might well discourage enough short-term trading, not related to "real" financial flows, to prevent such divergences of

exchange rates from where they ought to be. Its fans also argue that a Tobin tax would raise funds for useful expenditure such as third world debt relief. What could be more satisfying than taking from the international elite of financial fat cats and giving to the world's poorest people, at the same time as making the financial markets more orderly?

Sadly, there are many possible objections to a Tobin tax. Some are practical. Who would enforce and collect it? Why should a small tax actually discourage speculators when transactions costs in most markets are already much higher than the proposed tax rate - and when the potential gains from speculation are so enormous? But the main problem with the idea is that it rests on the existence of immutable fundamentals, which sensible investors will reflect in the price at which they are willing to trade but from which the Soros and suckers can push them too far in one direction. There has to be an underlying truth, reflected in the efficient market price, from which self-fulfilling bubbles emerge and, ultimately, burst. The right policy for market stability in this case is to skim off the bubbles before they grow too big.

A pleasing vision, but a false one. The evidence is that financial markets, and not just their bubbles, can be inherently self-fulfilling. There is no true valuation corresponding to an objective set of economic fundamentals. To see this, just think about the importance of technology stocks in Wall Street's long bull run. None of the investors in these software and biotech companies has the remotest idea how valuable they ought to be, and the stocks trade at awe-inspiring prices while the companies' earnings remain low or even negative. There is simply too much uncertainty about future demand for different types of high-tech products, not to mention the underlying science. But the same point can be made about the Asian markets. They were valu-



able as long as they were valuable, and when enough investors changed their mind, they weren't.

As the great master, John Maynard Keynes put it, writing in 1937, a market valuation "... is subject to sudden and violent changes. The practice of calmness and immobility, of certainty and security, suddenly breaks down. New fears and hopes will, without warning, take charge of human conduct. The forces of disillusion may suddenly impose a new conventional basis of valuation."

In today's high-speed markets, a change in expectations can rapidly create a new future. As soon as the general optimism about the Tiger economies foundered, for whatever reason, their currency and stock markets crashed and, lo, their economic future no longer looks rosy. This is not to say that fundamentals do not matter at all, for it is also true that the Asian economies were labouring under weak banking systems, corrupt loans and bad government. If this were not the case, they could probably have sailed quite swiftly out of the crash, as the western economies did after the stock market crash of 1929. As it is, recovery is going to take a long haul of political and institutional reform as well as the IMF's economic medicine. In the real economy, the fundamentals do still matter.



John Maynard Keynes warned of the "forces of disillusion"

duced the volatility of share prices. This is consistent with the view that the market is entirely self-fulfilling, because in that case the more investors there are, the more likely there are to be different views about where the market is heading. Bubbles still emerge - they do so whenever a critical mass of investors adopts the view that it is head-

ing up and up. But increasing transaction costs via a tax would not only prevent bubbles but would also increase day-to-day volatility.

Does this have any implications for Wall Street now? One comfort is that if Wall Street does crash, the American economy is in good shape. Inflation is low. So is government borrowing. The US technological edge has widened, and the economy starts from a position of having the lowest unemployment rate for a quarter of a century. Besides, Mr Greenspan proved himself amazingly good at sweeping up after the 1987 crash, and there is every reason to believe the Fed would do as good a job again.

However, even better news is that there exists a wide difference of opinion about where US shares are heading. The believers in a "new economic paradigm" argue that technology is delivering higher prospective growth and low inflation, justifying the current and higher levels of share prices. Somewhat alarmingly, all of Main Street, USA seems to have joined this group, if the popularity of investment clubs is anything to go by. Still, there are real benefits from a frothy stock market. It does encourage venture capitalists and entrepreneurial investors in high-technology companies to end, helping to create its own fundamentals.

On the other hand, there is also a Barnum camp which reckons the stock market is a dangerously stretched bubble about to burst at the first clear sign of re-emerging inflation and a downturn in the business cycle.

Along with Alan Greenspan's carefully timed reflections that the stock market might be suffering "irrational exuberance" and his steady massaging of expectations in readiness for a rise in interest rates, we have to hope that there might just be enough scepticism in the market already to prevent anything worse than a serious correction on Wall Street.

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Newspaper group profits hit record

By Vincent Wall

The current financial year has started positively in all areas of independent newspapers' global operations, chairman Tony O'Reilly informed the group's AGM in Dublin yesterday.

"With the Irish economy continuing to grow very strongly and the southern hemisphere's economies weathering the fall out from South East Asia, we expect the out-turn for the year will be an improvement over 1997," he added.

Pre-tax profits rose by 36 per cent last year to a record level of just over £10m.

Dr O'Reilly said Princes Holdings the Cable & MDS company in which Independent has a 50 per cent stake, now had over 140,000 customers and a capacity for 500,000 homes passed, equivalent to half the households in the country.

He said he hoped to be able to announce some interesting news on developments in this area in the next two months but he did not elaborate as to whether this referred to Princes Holdings' anticipated bid for Cablelink or the possibility that the company might take a Stock Exchange flotation.

Referring after the meeting to a possible link to cable, group chief executive Liam Healy said Princes Holdings owned 50 per cent of Clear Channel of the US, was interested in expanding its opera-



Tony O'Reilly (right) and Liam Healy at yesterday's AGM

tions in Ireland and that Independent was equally interested. Asked about reports that the Daily Mail might be able to establish a national daily title in Ireland in partnership with Ireland on Sunday, Mr Healy said every new entrant would pose a threat but that it would have a tough fight against the likes of the Star, the Mirror and the Sun.

In terms of the groups core Irish titles, he said all papers, including the Sunday Independent, needed regeneration over a period but that design changes should be gradual and should not be noticed by readers.

The new Saturday magazine which has brought sales to a record 182,000 on that day, was only up and running for six months, he said, and like any start-up operation was incurring initial losses. But he stressed

that it would make profits soon. The Sunday Tribune in which Independent has a 29 per cent stake, was making considerably lower losses than before.

Mr Healy said that the group had not yet decided how much to invest in the London Independent and the Independent on Sunday. "It's a question of evaluating what's required in terms of bringing the titles back to profitability in a three to five-year timescale. But we will support them for whatever is needed."

Earlier Brendan Hopkins, managing director of Independent Newspapers UK, said sales on the daily Independent had stabilised significantly at 220,000 while sales on the Independent on Sunday had risen by 7 per cent since the titles were purchased outright earlier this year.

EU blocks pay-TV link up

Telekom, two of the partners in the deal, but that Bertelsmann, the third key player, had rejected making any further concessions to win EU approval.

"The Commission has just unanimously decided to ban the venture of Deutsche Telekom, Bertelsmann and the Kirch group. That means a formal decision has today been taken,"

Mr Van Miert told a news conference. "A final attempt was made to try and reach a solution that would meet our concerns regarding competition. I went as far as to make a verbal proposal that was agreed by Mr Kirch, but totally refused by Bertelsmann."

Mr Van Miert told a news conference. "A final attempt was made to try and reach a solution that would meet our concerns regarding competition. I went as far as to make a verbal proposal that was agreed by Mr Kirch, but totally refused by Bertelsmann."

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
UK	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Australia	1.5250	1.5250	1.5250	1.5250	1.5250
Canada	0.7150	0.7150	0.7150	0.7150	0.7150
Denmark	6.4600	6.4600	6.4600	6.4600	6.4600
France	6.5500	6.5500	6.5500	6.5500	6.5500
Germany	1.9360	1.9360	1.9360	1.9360	1.9360
Italy	1.9360	1.9360	1.9360	1.9360	1.9360
Japan	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00
Netherlands	2.2030	2.2030	2.2030	2.2030	2.2030
Portugal	200.48	200.48	200.48	200.48	200.48
Spain	166.36	166.36	166.36	166.36	166.36
Sweden	8.4660	8.4660	8.4660	8.4660	8.4660
Switzerland	1.7360	1.7360	1.7360	1.7360	1.7360

Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
Argentina	167.00	167.00	167.00	167.00	167.00
Brazil	1.5500	1.5500	1.5500	1.5500	1.5500
China	8.2750	8.2750	8.2750	8.2750	8.2750
Czech Rep	136.76	136.76	136.76	136.76	136.76
Denmark	6.4600	6.4600	6.4600	6.4600	6.4600
France	6.5500	6.5500	6.5500	6.5500	6.5500
Germany	1.9360	1.9360	1.9360	1.9360	1.9360
Italy	1.9360	1.9360	1.9360	1.9360	1.9360
Japan	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00	161.00
Netherlands	2.2030	2.2030	2.2030	2.2030	2.2030
Portugal	200.48	200.48	200.48	200.48	200.48
Spain	166.36	166.36	166.36	166.36	166.36
Sweden	8.4660	8.4660	8.4660	8.4660	8.4660
Switzerland	1.7360	1.7360	1.7360	1.7360	1.7360

Interest Rates

Country	Rate	Term
UK	5.75%	3 months
France	5.75%	3 months
Germany	5.75%	3 months
Italy	5.75%	3 months
Japan	5.75%	3 months
Netherlands	5.75%	3 months
Portugal	5.75%	3 months
Spain	5.75%	3 months
Sweden	5.75%	3 months
Switzerland	5.75%	3 months

Bond Yields

Country	3m	6m	1yr	2yr	3yr	5yr	10yr
UK	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%
France	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%
Germany	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%
Italy	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%
Japan	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%
Netherlands	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%
Portugal	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%
Spain	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%
Sweden	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%
Switzerland	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%	5.75%

Source: Bloomberg

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est. floor	Open
Long Call	Jun-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Put	Jun-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Call	Jul-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Put	Jul-98	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Life FTSE 100 Index Option

Series	Call	Put	Call	Put	Call	Put
FTSE 100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
FTSE 100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
FTSE 100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Bloomberg

Commodity Indices

	Low	Volume	Interchange
1.9	126.86	1697550	1697540
2.0	127.01	255550	734500
3.0	127.25	7282100	1272500
4.0	127.52	5593400	1259100
5.0	128.22	494400	0
6.0	129.01	744000	1285500
7.0	130.00	1463500	1307610
8.0	131.00	7824500	1310000
9.0	132.00	3094400	0
10.0	133.00	400700	0
11.0	134.00	0	0
12.0	135.00	1330700	1330700
13.0	136.00	1837600	1812500
14.0	137.00	178500	122200
15.0	138.00	0	107800
16.0	555000	2814400	1728200

	Aug	Aug	Aug	Aug	Aug	Aug
	230	302	228	302	228	302
WTI Crude (\$/bbl)	243	243	243	243	243	243
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Ultimate Tests for future of England

Clive Woodward's squad of rookies arrive in Australia tonight ready for a baptism of fire. Chris Hewett reports

A PURPLE-FACED collection of Wallaby apparatchiks have gone out of their way to place this summer's England party in what they consider to be its correct historical perspective: "The biggest sell-out since Gallipoli" was the ill-judged and gratuitously offensive contribution from Dick McGruther of the Australian Rugby Union. Sensibly, Clive Woodward has not responded in kind, but had he chosen to do so he might have misquoted a former cigar-smoking Prime Minister by saying: "Never in the field of sporting conflict has so much bile been spouted by so many about so little."

England have toured the southern hemisphere with young, inexperienced and largely experimental squads before and will doubtless do so again, especially now that the bumbling blunderbusses of the International Rugby Board have conceded that the constitution of a national team is entirely a matter for the nation concerned. Not to put too fine a point on it, the Wallabies themselves have visited these shores armed with players conspicuous only by their anonymity. The fact that many of those players promptly announced themselves as world-class acts was, surely, the whole point of the exercise.

"The purpose of this trip is to discover exactly how many of the current crop are of genuine Test standard and by the time we get home, we'll know the answers," said Woodward, the England coach, yesterday. "Considering we're less than 18 months away from a World Cup, that information will be incredibly valuable. Priceless, even. I only see positives and pluses arising from the next five weeks or so. It's going to be very interesting, very exciting and, most importantly, very instructive."

Woodward has not changed his opinion of the itinerary, which includes four Tests in seven matches and enough travelling to reduce David Hempleman-Adams to a pipe and slippers man. "Ideally, the five matches in New Zealand would have been the start and finish of it," said the coach, pointedly omitting any reference to the Australian and South African ambushes awaiting him at either end. He is quite right, of course; the Springbok Test in Cape Town on 4 July is an unnecessarily vicious sting in the tail.

Not that there will be many tea parties in New Zealand. "I don't think the players appreciate even now the sort of pace, ferocity and intensity they are about to be exposed to," said John Mitchell, whose value to



The England coach, Clive Woodward, in a confident mood at Twickenham yesterday before heading south

Photograph: Robert Hallam

Woodward as an assistant coach will be magnified a hundredfold by his rich experience as a former Wallaby and All Black captain. "They are going to have to learn and learn quickly, for the culture back home is one of keeping the ball alive and running opponents clean off

their feet." Will the Allied Dunbar Premiership have prepared the less experienced tourists for the rigours of perpetual rugby motion? "Well, it's all we have," replied Mitchell, less than encouragingly.

He did, however, agree that the All Blacks themselves are

embarking on a transitional spell, having lost Sean Fitzpatrick and Zinzan Brooke to retirement, Justin Marshall to long-term injury and several other renowned Silver Fern foot soldiers to the physical ravages of the high-impact Super 12 provincial series. "There

might be one or two unfamiliar faces, but the production line looks in pretty good order to me and rather like our own newcomers, those players called into the Test side will see it as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

All of which tended to suggest that the seafaring nature of this week's England "bonding" session on the Solent was organised more in hope than expectation; if the combined talents of the southern hemisphere superpowers amount to a sporting iceberg, the tourists are very definitely several decks short of a Titanic. Matthew Dawson's 37-strong crew are sailing into stormy waters and most hardened realists doubt whether the ship will withstand the first squall.

Yet Woodward was quite justified in his assertion that give or take a handful of high-profile absences - David Rees, Jeremy Guscott, Will Greenwood, Kyran Bracken, Lawrence Dallaglio and Neil Back spring to mind - the "form" players were safely on the plane that left Heathrow for Brisbane last night. If the late apologies received from Greenwood and Back are likely to prove severely debilitating, especially with the likes of Guscott, Mike Catt, Phil de Glanville and Richard Hill already on an unavailability list of Proustian proportions, oth-

er positions remain very much open to offers.

"No worst case scenario has entered my thinking," insisted Woodward, his upbeat performance sharply at odds with the apocalyptic soundings from Down Under. "What would constitute a success? Coming back home with five or six obvious World Cup contenders to go with those we already know about."

Such a return is entirely feasible; more feasible, certainly, than five or six victories. In southern hemisphere company, three wins from seven outings would be a spectacular triumph.

ENGLAND'S TOUR ITINERARY: Saturday, 6 June: Australia (at Sunbury Stadium, Brisbane); Saturday, 13 June: New Zealand A (at Rugby Park, Hamilton); Tuesday, 16 June: New Zealand A (at Eden Park, Auckland); Saturday, 20 June: New Zealand (at Eden Park, Auckland); Tuesday, 23 June: New Zealand (at Eden Park, Auckland); Saturday, 27 June: New Zealand (at Eden Park, Auckland); Saturday, 4 July: South Africa (at Newlands, Cape Town).

ENGLAND SQUAD: Backs: N. Bell (Northampton), M. Perry (Bath), T. Stanger (Leicester), S. Brown (Richmond), D. Chapman (Leicester), M. Moore (Sale), J. Sanderford (Sale), J. Potter (Leicester), S. Ravenscroft (Saracens), A. King (Worcester), J. Lawrence (Bristol), J. Whitlock (Newcastle), S. Sedgwick (Gloucester), M. Dawson (Northampton), capt. P. Richards (London Irish), F. Forster (Leicester), S. Clarke (Richmond), A. Widdowson (Gloucester), G. Chuter (Saracens), R. Cockrell (Leicester), P. Greening (Gloucester), D. Groom (Richmond), V. Green (Worcester), G. Clancy (Gloucester), G. Archer (Newcastle), P. Fildes (Gloucester), D. Greenwood (Saracens), D. Simms (Gloucester), S. Clarke (Richmond), A. Dagnall (Gloucester), L. Moody (Leicester), S. O'Connell (Gloucester), R. Pugh-Jones (Sale), P. Sanderson (Sale), B. Sturnham (Saracens).

The four new boys given their chance against Australia



Spencer Brown
Age: 24. Club: Richmond.
A Royal Marine bandsman, which explains the phenomenal lung-power he displayed during the English Rugby Partnership XV's tense battle with the All Blacks in Bristol last November. Brown's famous double tackle, one on either side of the pitch in the space of 12 seconds, launched him into red rose contention and his snappy finishing did the rest.



Steve Ravenscroft
Age: 27. Club: Saracens.
With Michael Lynagh on his left shoulder and Philippe Sella on his right, Ravenscroft was always likely to learn a thing or two. His education is now complete, thanks to an error-free season at Vicarage Road in which his tackling and ball-retention were a striking feature of Sarries' rise to fame and fortune. He is a hard nut.



Ben Sturnham
Age: 24. Club: Saracens.
A physical specimen of Lomuesque proportions, Sturnham's sprint times also bear comparison with Auckland's biggest export. Saracens insist he is not yet the finished article - "he still has to learn to think his way through a game," says Mark Evans, the Londoners' director of rugby - but in a big man's game, Sturnham has size on his side.



Pat Sanderson
Age: 20. Club: Sale.
A real dark horse. Sanderson impressed some good judges with his energetic contributions at England A level last season and John Mitchell, who knows a thing or two about back row play, thinks he has the ability to prosper at the top level. He will have to play out of his socks, though; Neil Back and Richard Hill will soon be on the warpath.

Need for Scottish backs to improve

JOHN RUTHERFORD believes Scotland's fighting spirit will enable them to bounce back from Tuesday's 51-26 defeat by Fiji in Suva. Rutherford, the assistant coach, admitted the Scots did not do themselves any favours with some weak back play in the opening match of their tour.

However, he felt certain that that beating would not destroy confidence. "I know that it is difficult to get over a defeat but the good thing about Scots players is that they can pick themselves up again," Rutherford said.

In contrast, the Fiji coach, Brad Johnstone, a former All Black front rower, fears the worst for the Scots when they meet Australia in two internationals next month. "They're going to have to improve markedly to hold any southern hemisphere nation. They've got a big job, it's going to be a big ask for them to compete with the Wallabies," Johnstone said.

Scotland have delayed announcing their team to face Victoria in Melbourne on Saturday until today. But the expectation is that those players who did not play against Fiji will be given an outing. Rutherford is looking for a big improvement from the backs. "Basically, we played too flat an alignment," he said. "What we have to vary our angle of attack and ensure that there are players forming a second wave of attack."

Rod Macqueen, the Australian coach, did not welcome Fiji's win, saying: "The last thing we want is more pressure put on us with suggestions they [the Scots and England] are under strength."

The Australian Rugby Union is becoming concerned over ticket sales for the internationals against England and Scotland, with both countries minus much of their best talent. The Scots' first international against Australia, in Sydney on 13 June, is selling reasonably well and is expected to draw a good crowd on the day. The ARU is banking on the Scots proving competitive to boost sales for the second international in Brisbane on 20 June.

Wales suffered another setback yesterday as they were prepared for their tour of southern Africa, with Allan Bateman ruled out of the trip. The Richmond and British Isles centre will have surgery next Wednesday - the day after Wales leave for Zimbabwe - on a knee injury he sustained at the start of this year.

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Photograph: Allsport

● **Silver Patriarch**, short-headed by Benny The Dip at Epsom 12 months ago, has been confirmed a runner in the Coronation Cup at Epsom a week tomorrow.

French Derby betting		
L	Horse	William Hill
—	Croco Rouge	3-1
5-2	Saratoga Springs	3-1
9-2	Seymour	6-1
5-1	Nuclear	13-2

	Sedim	10-1
8-1	Seetino	10-1
10-1	Prolix	12-1
14-1	Thief Of Hearts	12-1
18-1	Dreams Well	20-1
18-1	Rabeh	28-1
	Central Park	25-1

	Home	C	H	L	S	T
T	Gaelic Storm	14-1	12-1	11-1	10-1	11-1
F-2	Sabot	25-1	20-1	20-1	25-1	20-1
1-1	The Luncheon Wagon	25-1	25-1	25-1	25-1	25-1
92	Indian Spirit	25-1	33-1	33-1	33-1	33-1

Miss Wokingham

Wokingham betting

Course: 10-1 Shattering Sky, 16-1 Family Crest, Nuclear Debate, 20-1 Apache Pad, Genshwin, Manned, Ogd Perryson View, Tides, Triple Hay, World Premier, Last Shannon.

William Hill: 8-1 Shattering Sky, 20-1 Apache Pad, Genshwin, Double Action, Family Crest, Genshwin, Hay, Manned, Nuclear Debate, Ogd, Triple Hay & World Premier, 25-1 others.

Landladies: 10-1 Shattering Sky, 16-1 Perryson

Royal Hunt Cup betting
 Coast: 14-1 Polesnik, 16-1 Rudimental, 18-1 Ishikawa, 18-1 Wolf, 20-1 Brian Roward, Darnocoy, 20-1 For Your Eyes Only, Kamenashi Star, Rahsen, Ramon, Seltish, Showtime
 Star Inset: 25-1 bar.
 William Hill: 2-1 Polesnik, 16-1 For Your Eyes Only

Rudimental: 20-1 Crumpton Hill, Darmsway, Gulf Street, Rahway, Seffish; 25-1 bsc.

Ladefolkes: 10-1 Pasternak, 16-1 Darmsway & Gulf Street, 20-Crumpton Hill, Showboat, For Your Eyes Only, Rudimental, Rahway, West, Seffish & Braver Road, 25-1 bsc.

Tote: D-1 Pasternak, 16-1 Darmsway, For Your Eyes Only, Gulf Street, Rahway & Rudimental, 20-1 bsc.

CARTMEL

2.00: 1. LASER LIGHT LADY (A Dobbin)
14-1; 2. Sun Fairy 6-1; 3. Bollero 11-8
11 rem. 2.5 (M Waring). Pts: £740; £300
£230. £120. DF: £320. CSF: £2138. Tric
£12550. NR: Funky.

2.30: 1. WISE ADVICE (L Wyer) 5-2
for; 2. Blair Castle 8-1; 3. Blazing Day

2-2, 7 ran. 5-2 Jk fav Last Try (4th), 1/4, 1/2 (M Hammond). Totals: £360; £220, £220, £220, £110. CSF: £268.

3.60: 1. WHITE DIAMOND (Miss F Robinson) 7-2; 2. Temple Garth 5-1; 3. Whiteb 9-1, 5 ran. 10-1 fav Albert Blake 9, 8, 10 (Lucinda V Russell). Totals: £370; £130, £280, £280, £130. CSF: £247. Non Runner: Good Profit.

3.30: 1. MUTASARF (R Johnson) 7-2; 2. Chiswick Park 5-1; 3. J.J. Reding 2-1.

4.00: 1. CYPRESS AVENUE (R Thorne)
ton) 3-1; 2. Distant Hills 8-4; S. Rocket Run
11-8 fav 7 nat. 7, 3. (Mrs V Ward). Total: \$420.00
E170. E140. DF: \$420. CSF: \$988.

4.10: 1. GREEN CRUSADER (R Thorne)
ton) 6-2; 2. Vignaro 6-4 fav; 3. Stylish in
terval 2-1.4 nat. 2/5. 13. Mini V Ward). Total
E170. E140. DF: \$420. CSF: \$988.

2450. DF: 2400. CSF: £147.
Placepot: £1430. Newpodot: £3720.

QUADRU

5.00: 1. KAAMEN (R Hls) 5-1; 2. Infr
15-8 for 3. Democracy 8-1 11 nm. 2 1/1
(B Hantury). Totat: £500; £160. £170. £18
DF: £550. CSF: £1401. Trio: £3500.
6.25: 1. TARDIEN (K Falon) 6-4 for 1.
Dedz Alta 4-1; 3. Silently 10-1 6 nm. 5 3/4

6.40: 1. CONWY LODGE (G Carter) even

THE
INDEPENDENT
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Lewis must think carefully before choosing future direction

ORDINARILY, I'm inclined to let boxing, as an industry, shift for itself. I have enough problems without worrying about arguments between promoters, the outcome of Don King's fraud trial or which television outfit holds the upper hand. However, I do admit to this recurring dream. In it, all disputes have been set aside and there is just one heavyweight champion. Nameless but undisputed.

Many in boxing claim to share the dream, including Jay Larkin of the American cable network Showtime which has Evander Holyfield and Mike Tyson under contract.

When calling from New York this week, Larkin's pitch was that Lennox Lewis will be making a big mistake

if he signs up with Showtime's powerful rival, Home Box Office, for contests in the has-been league of Ray Mercer and James "Buster" Douglas. Although HBO would release Lewis to Showtime if championship contests against Holyfield and Tyson came along, Larkin sees no sense in the proposed alliance. "Lennox and his people have until 6 June to decide so there's still plenty of time for them to work out the value of independence," he said.

Larkin puts it this way. "If Lennox signs with HBO and goes on to become the undisputed champion, he would be obliged to defend under the terms of his agreement with them. But as a free agent he would be in a position to call the shots as Evan-

der was after defeating Tyson. I've asked Panos Ellades [Lewis's main promoter] to think about this." It is important to know where Larkin is coming from. As astute as he is amiable, he operates on behalf of an organisation with close links to King who cannot make Lewis a counter offer while contesting the charge that he defrauded Lloyds of London.

Making no stand for Larkin, one thought comes to me. It is based on the notion that Lewis has never ducked anyone. Holyfield disputed this recently when drumming up next week's mandatory defence of his World Boxing Association title against Henry Akinwande at Madison Square Garden in New York.



KEN JONES

In the absence of excitement it was put to Holyfield that Lewis held him entirely responsible when negotiations for a unification bout broke down. Holyfield answered angrily. "Lewis should ask himself some questions," Holyfield growled. Negotiations for a unification

bout between Holyfield and Lewis fell through earlier this year when HBO failed to meet Holyfield's demand for a \$20m (£12.2m) guarantee. HBO offered Holyfield \$16m plus everything over \$50,000 pay-per-view buys. Accounting for King's cut, Lewis's purse of \$12m put the contest out of reach.

Holyfield blamed Lewis. "If Lennox really wants to be the undisputed champion, he should do what's necessary," he said. "I took less than I wanted for my first fight against Tyson because I believed I could win and make more from a rematch. That's the risk Lennox should be prepared to take. Why should I take less money to fight him. I didn't work this hard to come down

two levels to prove myself. The only thing preventing Lewis from fighting me is that it is easier to talk than fight."

There is no way of knowing how all this will work out but it would be wise for Lewis to think carefully before settling on a direction. Does Lewis really want to be known as the best man out there or will he settle for being a money machine? "It's for Lennox to decide," Larkin added. "His contests in the United States haven't made big money and people wouldn't be falling over themselves to watch him against some of the opponents HBO are proposing."

Not that Holyfield on his own is a big draw either; that was confirmed

for Showtime last November when a title defence against Michael Moorer piled up losses of around \$10m.

Tyson is the one sure-fire seller but there is no guarantee that he will return to the ring if, as expected, his licence is returned in July. "Everything that is said and written about Mike suggests that he is no great hurry to fight again," Larkin added. "And I think the group he is working with now didn't realise what they were getting into."

I have never felt it necessary in these matters to take one side or another. Larkin goes about his business in accordance with rough traditions but there may be more in his advice to Lewis than vested interest.

The final own goal in the tale of Goram

Scotland have long been used to the wild antics of their goalkeeper. But this week's revelations were enough to make even him walk away in disgust. Phil Gordon reports

THE only thing greater in Andy Goram's life than the love of a good time, is his love of cricket. So, perhaps Ian Botham, one of his sporting heroes, is best qualified to advise Scotland's errant goalkeeper on what to do next.

Goram's shock departure from the international scene just 14 days before the World Cup finals to avoid the glare of publicity that would make even Botham seem like a choirboy, is the final stroke in an eventful innings for the man who has represented his adopted country with both bat and big ball.

The Bury-born goalkeeper might have realised his cherished dream of representing Lancashire had football not taken over. Indeed, one of the first things Rangers had to do after paying Hibernian £1m for him in 1991 was to ban him from playing cricket in case their new investment injured himself.

In hindsight, cricket might have offered a safer diversion for Goram than the host of other pursuits that he filled his free time with. Drink, gambling and women ate away at his ability and fitness, and, more crucially, his mind.

The 34-year-old's main reason for walking out on Scotland is that he believes the stress from recent revelations about his private life has wrecked his mental preparations for the World Cup. Craig Brown, who tried to dissuade Goram from ending his 43-cap career, has been here before, of course.

Three years ago, Goram surprised Scotland supporters when he withdrew on the eve of a crucial European Championship qualifier with Greece, saying he was not "mentally attuned" to do the job. That confession prompted terrace wits to later taunt the Rangers goalkeeper with chants of "There's only two Andy Gorms". But, indeed, the real one now appears to have stood up.

Goram does not cut an athletic figure, but even his stocky frame has been fuller of late after a season of injuries. Headlines on the front page have

replaced those on the back page as the the goalkeeper's shock stock rose as his professional one plummeted. But Goram admits he largely has himself to blame.

In his autobiography, he hinted at my "knack of hitting the self-destruct button". Two failed marriages, both wives citing gambling and drinking problems, are the source of his downfall. His second wife, Tracy, a croupier whom he met, ironically, at an Edinburgh casino, served him with divorce papers as he fled off the team bus one day at Ibrox seeking £250,000, compounding his already perilous financial state.

The tabloids had a field day when it emerged that the building society had repossessed his house, but not as much as they enjoyed when a series of girlfriends emerged in kiss-and-tell stories as the footloose keeper failed patently to keep his private life in shape. Yet even Goram's love life seemed to be slipping out of the top flight.

One of the first girls to "out" the goalkeeper told of sex sessions in a plush Glasgow hotel but by last year a 17-year-old teenager made lurid claims about cavorting with Goram in an old caravan. A further affair with a former porn actress last July dragged his reputation further into the mire.

Through it all, Walter Smith stood by Goram, but even the Ibrox manager's patience wore thin when, in 1994, Goram went walkabout and missed the Scottish Cup final with Dundee United. Smith had allowed his goalkeeper to go on a family holiday to regain his fitness after an injury but Goram missed the flight back and ended up stranded in a Mediterranean resort without clothes or passport. His team-mates said to a 1-0 defeat.

Smith subsequently put Goram on the transfer list - an incident the keeper described as the "most humiliating moment of my life".

Goram took the message to heart for a while and regained his fitness, and the Scotland goalkeeper place from Jim



Andy Goram's chequered history finally caught up with the goalkeeper who could take no more

Photograph: AP

Leighton in time for Euro 96 where his inspirational presence underscored the meanness of defence in Europe and was beaten only by the genius of Alan Shearer and Paul Gascoigne.

Colourful is one way of putting Goram's lifestyle. You certainly could not find a greater contrast to the bespectacled, family man Leighton, who will now wear the No 1 jersey against Brazil on 10 June in the opening game of the World Cup finals.

But that apparent blandness also makes Leighton something Goram, his long-time friend despite their rivalry, is not reliable. Mr Undependable played in none of Scotland's last seven World Cup qualifying ties and it

is doubtful if Brown would have chosen him over Leighton again when the big stage beckoned.

Once Goram's club form won him the nod over Leighton, but not even Rangers want him now. He conceded 41 goals in his 36 Rangers starts this season, missing 16 games, and when the incoming manager, Dick Advocaat, cast his eye over the Ibrox staff a few months ago, Goram's was not one of the names on the to-be-retained list.

The list of would-be suitors contained only Crystal Palace and Brescia and both of those clubs have now lost interest following their relegation from the Premiership and Serie A respectively.

More importantly, Goram

had lost his suit of invincibility recently. A meagre total of eight shut-outs for Rangers last season did not do justice to the man whose performances against Celtic once prompted the former manager Tommy Burns to declare: "Put it on my tombstone: Andy Goram broke my heart."

But breaking hearts of another kind is what might have led the premature obituaries being written now for Goram's career.

The claim in a tabloid newspaper that Goram got a former Celtic sales executive pregnant and encouraged her to have an abortion - and another revelation is in the pipeline - sparked his latest bout of troubled mind. "Contentment is more important than controversy," he

said to Craig Brown in his resignation letter. Once Goram was rated the best goalkeeper around in one-to-one situations, being able to psyche out any striker. Now he seems incapable of winning the mind games with himself, as the rumblings of his letter to Brown further indicated, stating: "Yes, you have got to me. But I won't let it upset Craig's plans."

But upset Brown's plans he has. The Scotland coach said: "We had the best goalkeeping team in Europe in Andy and Jim and now it has been reduced by half." However, it may be that one, focused Leighton will prove better to the Scots' cause against Brazil than "two Andy Gorms".

Brown defends keeper's decision

By Phil Shaw
in New York

CRAIG BROWN last night defended Andy Goram's sudden withdrawal from Scotland's World Cup squad as "an honourable decision" and refused to rule out picking him again - despite the troubled goalkeeper's declared retirement from international football.

The Scotland manager, who welcomed Celtic's Jonathan Gould to their New Jersey training camp as back-up to Jim Leighton and Neil Sullivan, praised Goram for his selflessness and the timing of his announcement.

The 34-year-old Rangers keeper, who is out of contract and may join Crystal Palace, informed Brown on Tuesday that he was leaving. He felt that tabloid allegations about his private life were affecting his own and the squad's preparations for France 98, which Scotland open against Brazil on 10 June.

Brown said: "If people think it's a dereliction of his country, when in fact Andy was trying to be fair to Scotland, they're wrong. This could have carried on past the date when we couldn't have brought in a replacement. So we have to give him credit for an early decision."

"He could have stayed with us, gone on picking up his money and bonuses, and put us right in the soup in France. The decision he's made is an honourable one."

Goram, who also withdrew from a squad during the qualifying for Euro 96 claiming he was "not mentally attuned", has joined Everton's Duncan Ferguson and Leeds' David Robertson in self-imposed exile from the national team. Brown, however, is neither so well off for specialist players nor churlish enough to write him off. "If Andy comes back to me and says his life is more settled, I'll consider him."

According to Brown, Goram's "brightness" in practice contrasted with his untypically downbeat demeanour off the pitch. Goram had been "bombarded" by calls from non-sports journalists about his private life and the pressure had begun to tell.

Brown's assistant, the Aberdeen manager Alex Miller, brought the Lancashire-born Goram to Scotland from Oldham when he was with Hibernian. Miller said: "I spoke to

him privately and to me it wasn't the same Andy."

The latest twist in the soap opera that has run parallel to Goram's career of 43 caps began 24 hours earlier. He had asked to speak to Brown at breakfast, explaining that first he wanted him to read a letter.

After studying its contents, Brown went to Goram's room to find he had already packed to go home. "Andy said: 'I have to go.' I told him he was being a wee bit hasty but he was adamant. His concern was for his team-mates and Scotland. He was very upset at having to give me that letter."

Some will see the Goram saga as part of Scotland's fabled capacity for self-destruction. Memories will be stirred of the Mo Johnston "birds 'n' booze" episode at Italia 90; of Willie Johnston being banished from Argentina in '78 after a positive drug test; and even of Jimmy Johnstone's tired-and-emotional night at sea in a rowing boat before the '74 finals.

The truth is that while Goram clearly has problems, they are of a highly personal nature. The rest of the Scottish party here are more likely to be found on a rowing machine in the hotel gym than in a rowing boat. Their dedication is epitomised by Leighton, who at nearly 40 now becomes the undisputed first-choice again. The Aberdeen keeper will gain his 86th cap against the United States in Washington DC on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the London-born Gould said: "I was surprised to hear I was in the squad in Andy's place because I believe someone of his ability should be on the World Cup stage. He's taken a very brave decision and I hope it works out for him. But I've been keeping fit and I'm ready for this."

TODAY'S NUMBER

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The number of consecutive Georgian football League and Cup doubles (1992-97) won by Dynamo Tbilisi. Having won the title again this year, their quest for a seventh successive double was snuffed on Tuesday when a goal in the last minute of extra time gave Dynamo Batumi a 2-1 win in the Cup final.

Bitter McCann launches attack on Dempsey

By Simon Buckland

THE Celtic managing director Fergus McCann yesterday used his club's official weekly publication to launch an astonishing attack on those he accuses of undermining him.

Speaking in Celtic View, McCann pointed the finger at what he termed the "PR stunts" from Brian Dempsey, a former shareholder central to moves to buy out McCann's holding in the Parkhead club.

McCann said: "It is now clear that Brian Dempsey's

plans to attack the management of Celtic using a barrage of criticism and PR stunts is now underway, and will continue for several months." McCann has found himself under intense pressure since the resignation of the club's manager, Wim Jansen, but he insists progress is still being made.

In reply, Dempsey said: "We hope Mr McCann took good legal advice before penning this article and that it was not written in a fit of pique."

Manchester United are not prepared to sell Gary Pallister

back to Middlesbrough until after the World Cup.

Bryan Robson, the Boro manager, has made a bid, believed to be worth £2m, for the former England central defender. United are considering the offer, but are in no hurry to let Pallister go. They want to wait and make sure Jap Stam, who completes his £10.75m move to United from PSV Eindhoven on 1 July, comes through the World Cup for the Netherlands unscathed.

Steve Staunton has turned down a lucrative new four-year

contract with Aston Villa and is to leave the club.

The Republic of Ireland defender will take advantage of the Bosman ruling to move as a free agent, with his former club, Liverpool, Tottenham and Blackburn all being linked with possible attempts to sign him.

The French defender Rémi Garde, 32, has signed a new one-year deal with Arsenal after changing his mind about retiring from the game. The Gunners have also given a new one-year contract to John Lukic but have released Scott

Marshall and Chris Kiwomya.

The Italian international midfielder Roberto di Matteo has told Chelsea he wants to stay at Stamford Bridge for the foreseeable future - quashing media reports that he has been looking to return to Italy.

Everton's goalkeeping coach Mervyn Day, the former West Ham No 1, is in line to replace Les Reed as assistant manager at Charlton Athletic. On Day's recommendation, Everton are paying £40,000 for Stenhousemuir's Scotland Under-21 goalkeeper, Neil Alexander.

Croatia lose another striker

THE Croatian striker Igor Cvitanovic has been sent home from his country's World Cup training squad by the coach, Miroslav Blazevic, after refusing to run a few extra training laps.

Cvitanovic, 27, who plays for the Spanish side Real Sociedad, will miss France 98 if Blazevic does not have a change of heart. However, the player should not hold his breath.

Blazevic, who is fanatical about discipline, said: "Cvitanovic is definitely eliminated. Not even the President can save him now."

Cvitanovic said: "I was exhausted. It seems some can have the luxury of being worn down and I can't", alluding to Davor Suker, Zvonimir Boban and Robert Jarni, who were spared extra laps after complaining they were still worn out from a hectic club season.

Blazevic is considering calling up a substitute for the lanky forward. His 24-man squad are still shaken by the news that the former striker Alen Boksic will have to undergo knee surgery and is almost certain to miss next month's finals in France.

Jürgen Klinsmann, who is fighting for a starting role in Germany's team, has been forced to miss tonight's warm-up match against Finland in Helsinki because of a bruised shinbone.

Klinsmann collided with the defender Thomas Helmer in a training match on Tuesday and the soreness worsened. The 33-year-old team captain, who has been plagued by injuries this year, was flown to Munich for treatment. However, he is not expected to be ruled out for the World Cup.

Martina Hings and Venus Williams, who are seeded to meet in the women's quarter-finals, advanced to the third round unhindered. It has been argued that a case for equal prize-money with the men might be made from the quarter-finals onward. Yesterday was "children's day" at Roland Garros and child's play for the two 17-year-olds. Hings defeated Germany's Meike Babel, 6-1, 6-2, and Williams swept past Ai Sugiyama, of Japan, 6-0, 6-2, winning the first eight games.
